Commentary

Volume Fifty-One, Number Two, February 1971

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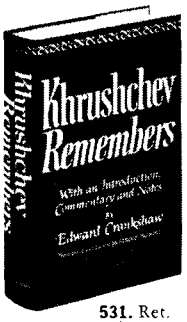

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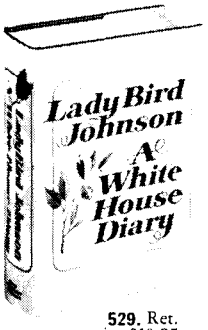

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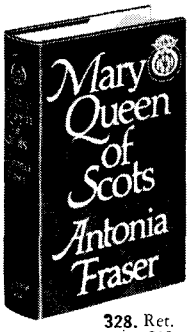

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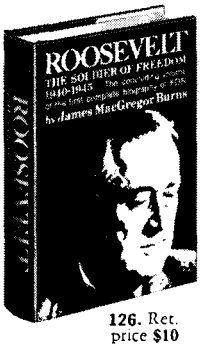

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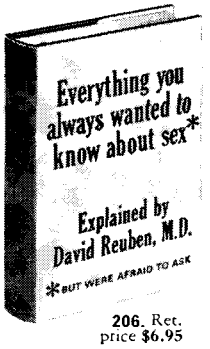

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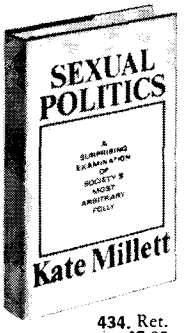

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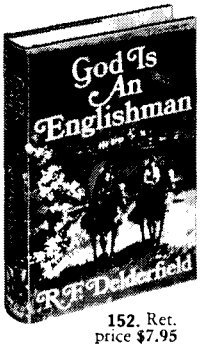

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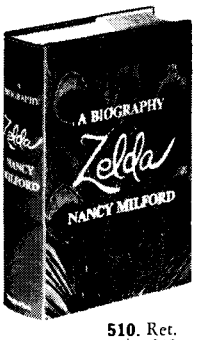

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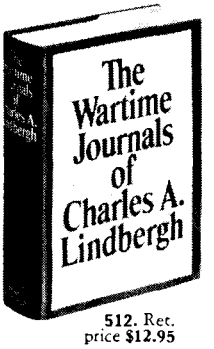

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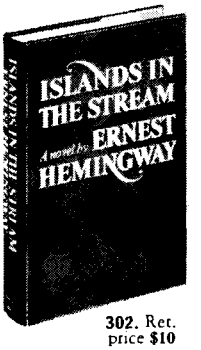

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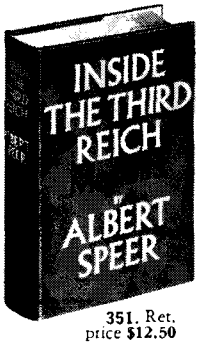

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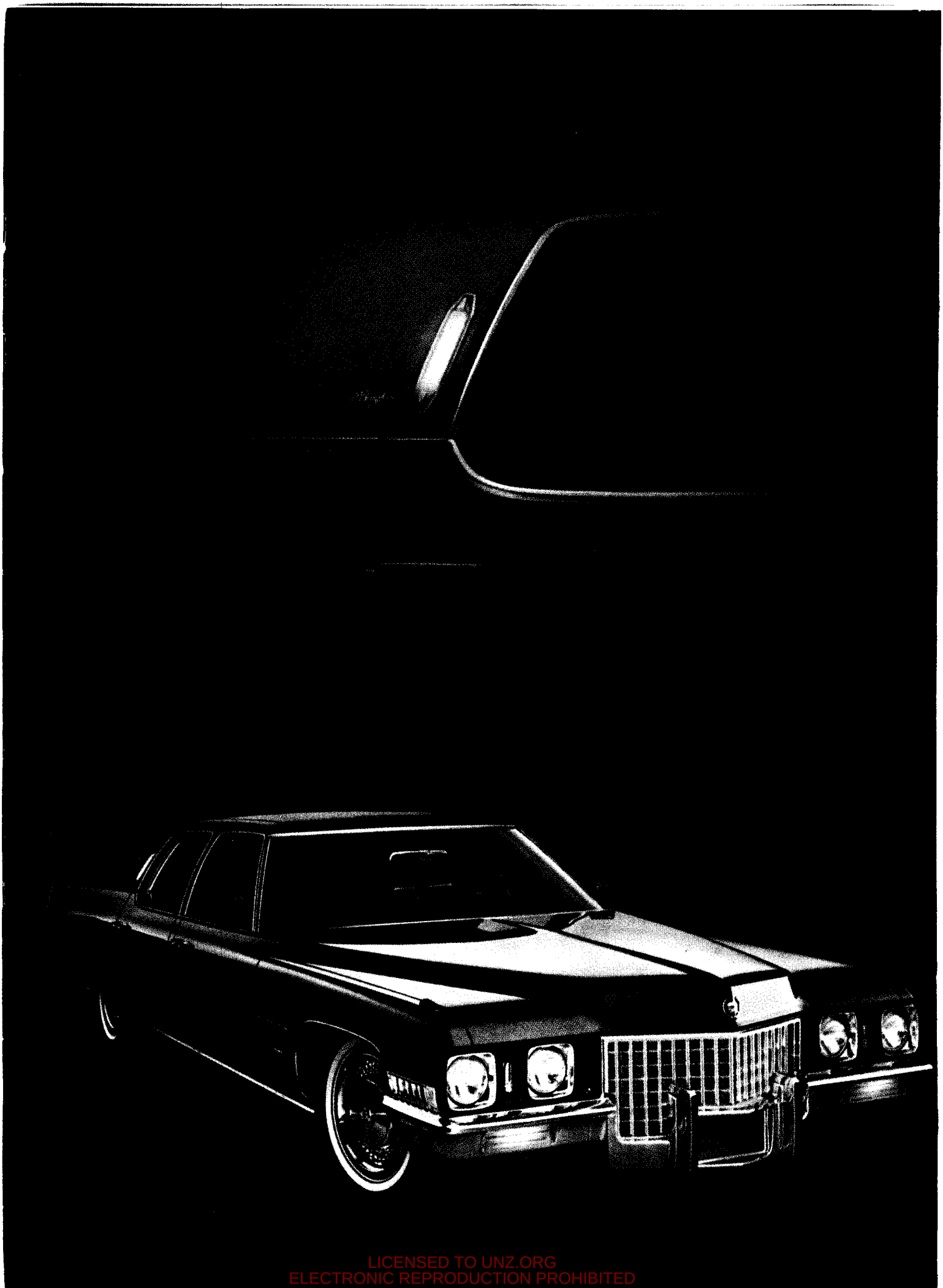

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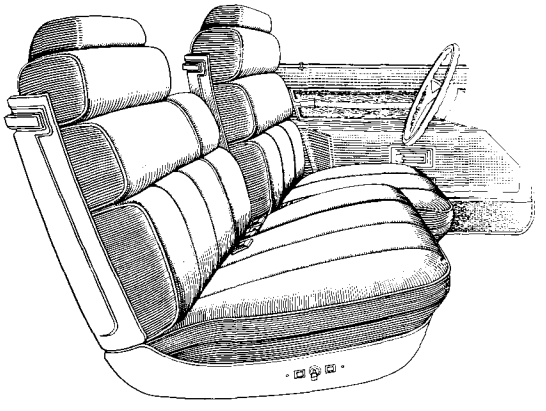

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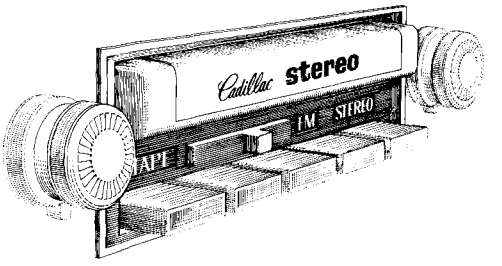

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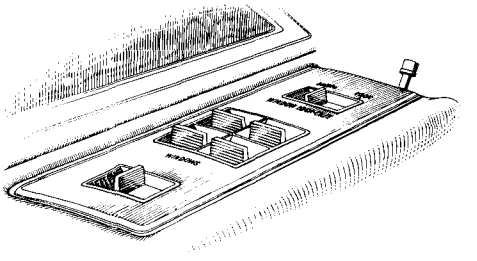

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Commentary

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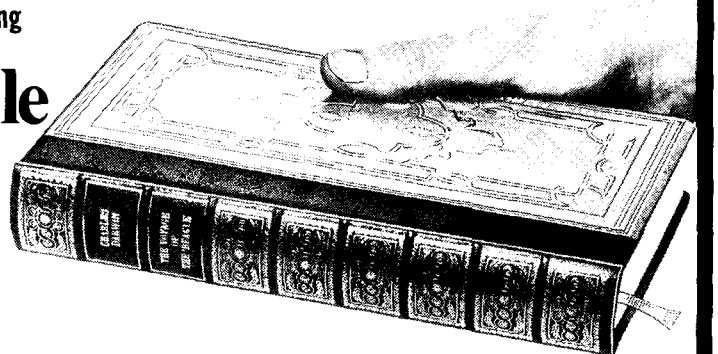

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Issues

The Tribe of the Wicked Son

Norman Podhoretz

No one knows how many Jews either belong to or actively support or lazily acquiesce in the attitudes of "the party of revolution," as Walter Laqueur (p. 38) calls what in its contemporary American guise is better known by the more appropriate (because so evasively vague) name of The Movement. It is certain that most American Jews were always hostile to The Movement, both in its narrowly political guise as the New Left and in its general incarnation as the counter-culture. It is equally certain that a great many of the more visible leaders of The Movement are not now and never have been Jews. David Dellinger is not Jewish; Tom Hayden is not Jewish; Staughton Lynd is not Jewish; Carl Oglesby is not Jewish; Timothy Leary is not Jewish; Kate Millett is not Jewish; and neither, it somehow seems necessary to add, is Stokely Carmichael Jewish, nor Huey Newton, nor Angela Davis. I myself can testify from personal experience that in its early days The Movement was remarkable for, precisely, the paucity of Jews among its leaders and constituents alike. Around 1960 it had, I would say, a decidedly Protestant flavor, with its tone being set by divines like A. J. Muste and Martin Luther King, so much so that some of the small minority of Jews associated with it at the time, mindful of the importance of Jews in the radical movement of the 30's, would often make self-conscious jokes about the wondrous Americanness of this new radicalism, the first indigenously American radical movement, it seemed, since the IWW and the Socialist party of Eugene Victor Debs.

Within a few years, of course, and especially with the luxuriant exfoliation of The Movement under the highly favorable climatic conditions of the American university campus, Jews had become more numerous and more visible within it. For every Hayden, there was now a Rudd, for every Leary a Rubin, for every Davis an Alpert, and for every Brown a Marcuse. Jews were still probably a small minority within The Movement itself, just as those Jews who joined or even sympathized with The Movement or any of its works unquestionably continued to represent an even smaller minority of the total Jewish population; and with the increasing hold of anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist ideas on The Movement, that minority has been diminishing further and further in size. Nevertheless, no matter how small the number or the proportion of Jews included in The Movement or among its supporters and apologists, it was large enough to encourage the kind of historical speculation Mr. Laqueur engages in and to inspire the kind of forebodings Nathan Glazer (p. 55) expresses as to its effects on the future security of the entire Jewish community.

Now, there is a notion abroad in the world, less common I think than it was a year or two ago but still to be encountered even in circles professedly (and professionally) committed to the goal of Jewish survival, that the participation of Jews in The Movement, far from constituting a problem to the Jewish community, does honor to that community and is an ornament to its "idealism." Thanks to the in-

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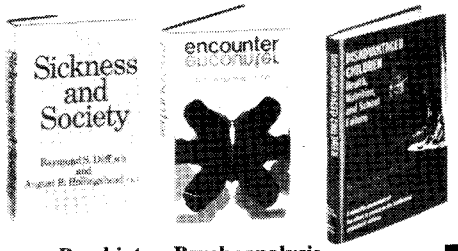

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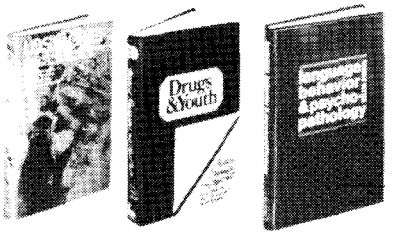

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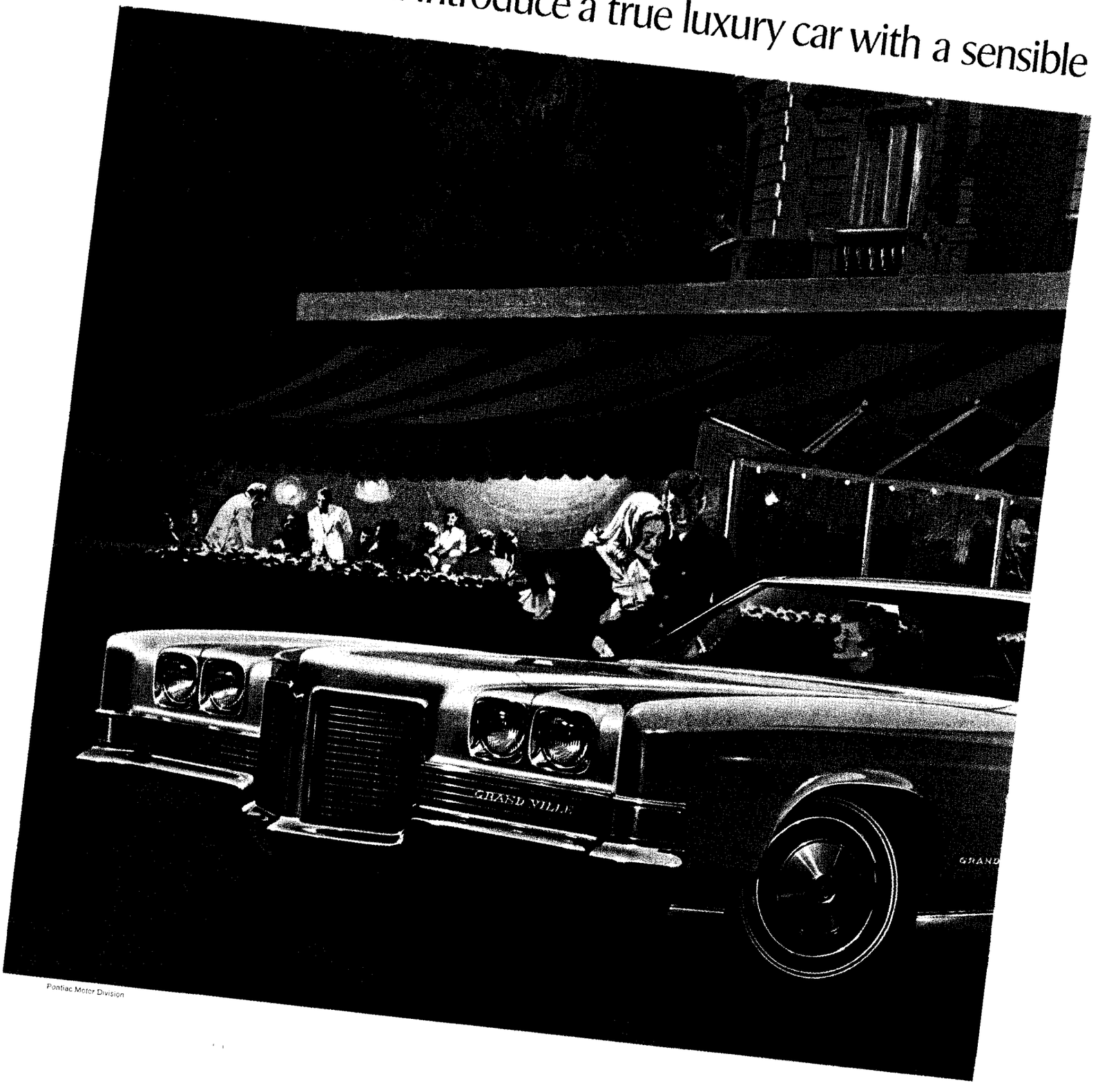

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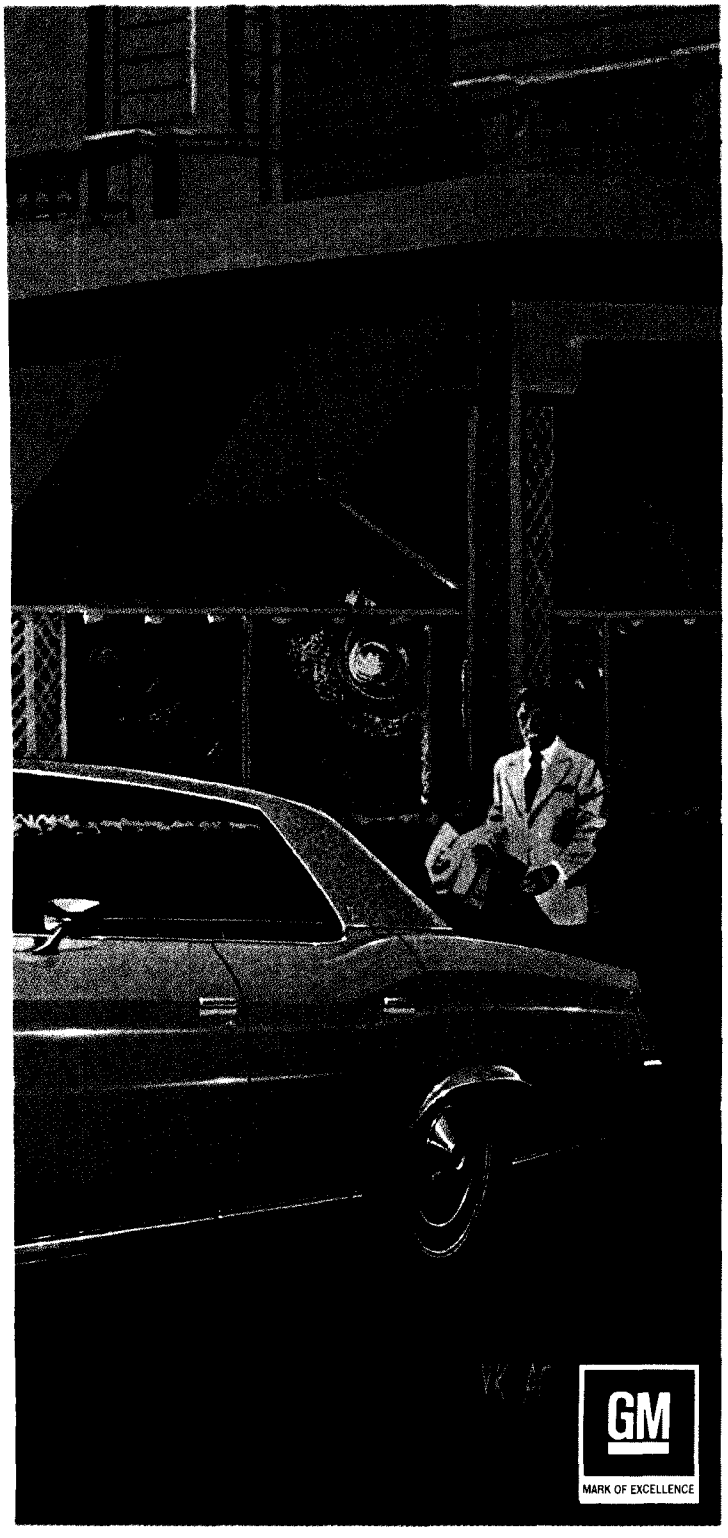

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fluence of this notion, Jewish organizations sometimes pay court to groups on the New Left through "dialogues" and subsidies and expressions of sympathy and solidarity. The most disgraceful example of such behavior which has ever come to my attention is the imprimatur (or perhaps one should say *hekhsher*) given by Balfour Brickner and other prominent rabbis to Arthur Waskow's *The Freedom Seder*, which Robert Alter (p. 47) characterizes after careful analysis as "a document of self-loathing and self-abasement masquerading as an expression of self-affirmation." With this formulation I would quarrel only to the extent of asking whether, harsh as it may sound, it is still not a touch too gentle to do justice to the truly abominable case at hand. For my own part, taking a lead from Mr. Laqueur's suggestive observation that New-Left radicalism is for American Jews a form of assimilationism and that the Jews who, for example, support Al Fatah against Israel are not primarily motivated by self-hatred, I would say that *The Freedom Seder* might more accurately be considered a contribution to the literature of Jewish anti-Semitism than to the literature of the often overlapping but nonetheless distinct phenomenon of Jewish self-hatred.

By anti-Semitism I mean here, very simply, *against the Jews*: against their duty and their right to exist, to live and not to die, to look after themselves and their families, to make the best of their circumstances, to pursue their own interests, to defend themselves and their own against all who wish for whatever reason to diminish or destroy them. A person of Jewish birth who consistently violates his human duty by denying those rights to himself may be said to be suffering from the sickness of self-hatred; if he extends that denial to the Jewish people in general, and especially if he does so in the name of justice, he may also be said to be guilty of the sin of anti-Semitism. To me it seems clear that such a person should no more be permitted to make any claim upon the sympathies, let alone the financial resources, of the Jewish community than his non-Jewish anti-Semitic friends could do.

WE HAVE lived these past few years in America through a re-enactment of the so-called Third Period of the 1930's when revolutionary militancy and provocation were the order of the day. Now, one gathers from a great many signs in the air, we have arrived at the threshold of a re-enactment of the Popular Front of the late 30's, when revolutionary militancy was muted for the sake of forging a broadly based alliance against the threat of fascism. The fact that there actually was a threat of fascism then in the form of Adolf Hitler and his allies and that no comparable threat exists anywhere today is unlikely to make much difference to all those who, having spent the years of their youth vainly Waiting for Lefty, are now apparently determined to pass their declining years huddled together with their progeny vainly Waiting for Righty. Convinced, at any rate, that the "Repression" is imminent, if it is not indeed already upon us, The Movement and its supporters are now reaching out for allies among groups which only yesterday were being stigmatized as fascists and imperialists themselves—the labor unions, for example, and the organized Jewish community.

In such a climate revolutionists suddenly start talking like reformers, haters of "Amerika" turn up as fervent patriots of the "real" America and Jewish anti-Semites as loyalists of the Higher Judaism. From this perspective, Waskow and some of the others mentioned by Mr. Alter might, as it were, be seen as premature Popular Fronters. But the Jewish community should not be fooled: they still belong to the tribe of the wicked son of whom it is said in the Haggadah—the real Haggadah, not the one the wicked son himself seems to have written in collaboration with his brother the simpleton under the title of *The Freedom Seder*—that his wickedness consists of his having removed himself from the community. Should his teeth then not be set on edge, and should he not be told that he has betrayed one of the most essential principles of the religion of his fathers?

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Letters from Readers

Women's Lib & the Liberated Woman

To the Editor of Commentary:

Although I am tempted to reply to the catty tone of Midge Decter's article ["The Liberated Woman," October 1970], I shall try to take her seriously. Beginning with her title and continuing throughout the article Miss Decter presumes to generalize about "The Liberated Woman." Unfortunately, she appears to have indulged in the sort of instant social analysis where wit outscores research. If Miss Decter generalized only from her personal and professional acquaintances (note that her typical liberated woman aspires to write), then she has misrepresented her article, and a new title is in order: "Some Liberated Women I've Met and Hated."

Assuming that Miss Decter did her homework but did not wish to burden us with it, what is her main point? Her liberated women do not need better pay, or, as they used to say, a fairer chance in the race of life. "What she heard most about . . . were problems of status." It is popular to explain the dynamics of social reform by referring to the status problems of reformers (e.g., David Donald on the Abolitionists). . . . Yet even if her article draws an accurate portrait of an important segment of Women's Liberation, this in no way affects the validity of Women's Liberation programs. Similarly, one may not dismiss the historical or moral claims of Abolitionism simply because numerous Abolitionists were not selflessly motivated. . . .

MacDonald S. Moore
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

She is a creature of the 40's and 50's: somewhat rueful, a bit snide at times, but no matter, Midge Decter's dissection of the liberated woman has a number of useful insights. One cannot help but suspect, however, that Miss Decter is guilty of a fundamental confusion between the often slick and mindless generational style of her protagonist and the far more serious and comprehensive matter of Women's Liberation. The genuine ideals and genesis of that movement—in its widest sense—surely transcend the tiresome, if fleetingly dramatic, pursuits of the pampered young woman Miss Decter portrays.

Two specific misconceptions also demand correction. The first is Miss Decter's assumption that the desire for *equality* between men and women presupposes an assertion of their *identical* nature. Such a notion would only be sustained by the most obtuse adherents of the movement; surely if I demand equal rights for blacks and whites I am not assuming that their skin colors are identical. Second, Miss Decter's glib dismissal of the reality of centuries of patriarchal values is highly misleading: when she displaces the constricting attitudes of certain men onto the mothers of those men (". . . what she was really denouncing them for was their having submitted to an earlier set of female demands . . . "), the author achieves nothing but evasion. For whatever it may entail, Women's Liberation does *not* imply a blanket toleration for everything female, most especially for pernicious values that may have been female-generated, but were in all likelihood responses to an oppressive male value system.

I would welcome a discussion of the liberated (or unliberated) woman from the vantage point of those born in the 20's and 30's, one which would genuinely confront the relationship of these women to the larger issues of the movement—without copping-out by indulging in a snide critique of the "60's woman."

(Dr.) Barbara F. Lefcowitz
Bethesda, Maryland

To the Editor of Commentary:

Midge Decter's biased and prissy caricature of the liberated woman was a great disappointment and certainly untypical of the thoughtful analysis to be found in Commentary. Her conclusion that the freedom now granted by society to women "is remarkably equal to that enjoyed by men" flies in the face of continued severe discrimination against women in all areas of public life, in training for the professions, and in all levels of employment. I suppose a similar statement could be made about the *de jure* equality achieved by the black minorities, but by now we have become sufficiently aware of the very real and sometimes subtle obstacles to achievement they face not to accept such conclusions without further examination.

While Miss Decter admits that there are certain "inevitable practical difficulties" that face women who choose both a career and marriage, she thinks that managing these "widens the options for gratification." Exactly what this means is difficult to explain to a woman who is forced to abandon her profession because of lack of adequate child-care centers and the astronomical cost of domestic help, both of which are not now deductible from the income taxes of most working mothers. The other solution she offers is chastity. This makes one smile at her idea of "equality." I wonder whether she is prepared to offer the same nostrum to the many men who often are forced by the press of business or community commitments to neglect their families for months at a time. I submit that the current Women's Lib efforts to establish child-care centers and tax allowances for domestic help is a more realistic and constructive approach to the problem of freeing both parents for meaningful work. . . .

As for the working women Miss Decter criticizes for having "problems of status," it apparently does not occur to her that their complaints might be justified. At the September 1970 hearings before the New York City Human Rights Commission, witness after witness (female) testified that regardless of educational background or experience (some had Ph.D.'s) the only employment offered was for secretarial or similar positions. No wonder these women find "serving" intolerable. As for those women who have been able to achieve despite the tremendous obstacles placed in their way because of their sex, Miss Decter finds them "restive." The reason for their restiveness may well be found in the U.S. Department of Labor statistics which show that women, working full time average $3,000 less than males holding comparable positions, regardless of the profession involved. This, rather than the general "uncongeniality" of which Miss Decter speaks, would certainly ex-

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plain the dissatisfaction which some of these women may experience.

Finally, Miss Decter exhibits her bias when she purports to reveal to her readers that "man forgoes the operations of his blind boyhood lust and agrees to undertake the support and protection of a family, and receives in exchange the ease and comforts of home," implying that the woman's part of the bargain is necessarily having pipe, slippers, and dinner warm and waiting for her "protector." A familiarity with the history of the laws of marriage and domestic relations leads most students to conclude that this abandonment of lusts (if indeed, it does occur, which Kinsey would have us doubt) is induced by a desire to pass on the family inheritance to legitimate male heirs and is not a supine surrender to the demands of females for a home, as Miss Decter would have her readers believe.

SUE WIMMERSHOFF-CAPLAN
Chairman, Equal Employment Opportunities Committee
New York Women's Bar Association
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Midge Decter displays either ignorance or a lack of sensitivity to the masculine types who have triggered the women's movement. Nor does she consider the real stresses of being an emancipated girl in a society containing *Esquire, Playboy,* and *Cosmopolitan* as well as a hostility to everything feminine, nurturing, maternal, and real which has rarely been matched, except perhaps in Sparta.

Also, I doubt whether Miss Decter has talked to enough college girls in the business world, which can resemble both the harem of the Grand Turk and the salt mines of Siberia to any girl trying to "make it." . . . Basically, of course, the reason for the really wild surge of Women's Lib feeling is the Men. It's easy for Midge Decter, having made her accommodation with the men of her time, to appreciate their problems. . . . But has Miss Decter encountered the *machismo* of today's intellectual males, has she met the business Ayn Randites, or the types who live at their psychoanalysts, or the permanent searchers dragging out experimental relationships with girls and simply refusing to take emotional, financial, or even intellectual "interest" (I don't even mean responsibility)? Has she ever tried a "singles' bar"? Has she read the critiques of motherhood and alimony *à la* Helen Gurley Brown? Or how to lie down and get walked over and love it in any article in *Cosmo*? Has she reflected on the dreary, humiliating, "everything-else-is-more-important" role thrust upon a woman who may want to have children and be nurtured and nurture? The intellectual style-setters of this country, the economic structure, the very quality of life leave a woman no choice if she is to have any future, growth, interest, or fun in life, but to become . . . a second-class man or a first-class conniving bitch. . . .

ESTHER SORETSKY
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I am in strong disagreement with Midge Decter's statement that freedom granted women by society is "remarkably equal to that enjoyed by men." As soon as she has said this, Miss Decter then points out that women are free to choose *either* a career *or* marriage. This is a choice that a man does not have to make. She admits that should a woman choose both a career and marriage many additional difficulties . . . will face her. But a man may pursue a career and have a family with no conflict. In fact, his ability to be successful in a career is often based directly on the fact that his wife does not (and cannot as long as he considers only a career for himself important) have a career. . . . It is because he is largely free of domestic and parental duties that he is able to devote extra time to his career. If a woman were to pursue a career with the same diligence as a man she would be branded a bad mother, . . . neglecting her family. . . .

MARY LEE GEISSER
Williamsville, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Midge Decter's credentials are given at the bottom of the first page of her article: not only is she executive editor of *Harper's*, but "in private life, Miss Decter is married and the mother of four children." Oddly enough, no male author in that issue was described in terms of his "private life" and number of children! Miss Decter then proceeds to set up her straw woman, making her the pampered little bitch we all know and love as the prototype of modern young womanhood in middle-class America, and then she knocks her heroine down for being what she has made her. Instead of dealing with the data documenting discrimination against women (gathered not by Women's Liberation, but by the Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor, NOW, President Kennedy's Commission on the Status of Women, President Nixon's Task Force on American Women, and various scholarly studies by Leo Kanowitz, Martin Gruberg, and others), Miss Decter . . . has her heroine dismiss them all as "boring." Does Miss Decter in her own mind really dismiss them . . . so easily?

Although I have all the qualifications listed by Miss Decter (i.e., a career and family) I do not consider it necessary that others suffer the same discouragements and difficulties I faced. Nor am I unmindful, as she seems to be, of the fact that most women suffer far worse because of their status as women: those who bear the brunt of poverty and racial discrimination; those whose families had no money to educate daughters; those who were turned down by admissions offices, or for fellowships, as "bad risks" because "they might get married"; those whose lives were overburdened by unwanted children because society allowed them no access to the means of controlling their own reproductive functions, and so on. It is, of course, comforting to consider oneself a worthy exception, and all others lazy. But that attitude overlooks the "invisible" women who didn't make it for the reasons listed above.

I found Miss Decter's supercilious, even-handedly condescending treatment of "pampered" young women and Women's Liberation (about which she knows little, to judge by the facts she offers) unconvincing and shallow. Perhaps she is too busy being an editor and mother of her own middle-class children to look beyond her nose at other women who have not had the advantages she has had. But then one wonders how she found time in that busy schedule to write such a lengthy personal attack on Sally Kempton (see Miss Kempton's article, "Cutting Loose," *Esquire*, Summer 1970). With such acrimonious female colleagues, who needs male chauvinism?

GAYLE HOLLANDER
Conway, Massachusetts

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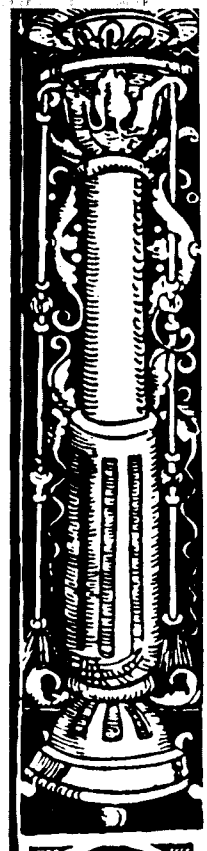

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To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . It may well be that there are people who exactly fit Midge Decter's and Dorothy Rabinowitz's ["The Radicalized Professor," July; "The Activist Cleric," September] descriptions . . . but surely there are many more who might nevertheless qualify as liberated women, radical professors, and activist clerics. Your writers sound like Vice President Agnew insisting that permissive child-rearing has caused the emergence of bomb throwers. Although I find their thinking and their conclusions much more in tune with my own viewpoint than Mr. Agnew's ever could be . . . this does not blind me to the fact that their methods of thought are much the same as Mr. Agnew's. . . .

Mrs. Josef Solomon
Moorestown, New Jersey

To the Editor of Commentary:

Midge Decter is apparently suggesting that some young women are not worthy of liberation. Such an old historic argument (used for so many other groups) and so banal! Young people have always had a tendency to be ahistoric, to minimize the price to be paid for their own passivity. This is equally true of the young blacks in the civil-rights movement.

Miss Decter paid a high price to get where she has and she knows it. I cannot respond favorably, however, to her plea that the next generation should pay an equally high price. Social improvement occurs so slowly for precisely this reason: at the moment of truth, each generation is outraged if there is a hint that the next might get the same thing cheaper. Miss Decter is the only fairy princess in her story, having made it in both worlds. If women do become liberated—that is, share in the use of power and develop freely their craftsmanship without being discriminated against (paying a higher price than men)—then maybe in the next generation there will be lots of fairy princesses just like Miss Decter. And of course they won't remember that she paved the way.

Jeanne S. Binstock
University of Massachusetts
Boston, Massachusetts

To the Editor of Commentary:

It is indeed remarkable that Commentary should find no more cogent statement on the Women's Liberation Movement to publish than Midge Decter's essay, a deeply frivolous exercise, parading as high responsibility.

Selecting as her foil a childlike, pliable, spoiled "child of our time," Miss Decter pours a contempt not unlike that of the wicked fairy upon her heroine's "pretty head." The "child" does not know the "realities." And what are they? That marriage is a transaction imposed for their own procreative ends by women upon men, the men exchanging their sexual freedom for home comforts. But setting aside the question of whether this is an adequate view of marriage (I think it is not), it is precisely the fact that the terms of this "transaction" are not working that has caused our present malaise.

Formerly, perhaps, a satisfactory enough proportion of males remained "enslaved" within marriage, sheepishly appreciative of those not always welcome gifts of self that women were able to bestow. Yet who would deny that these homely gifts have been made to seem a paltry substitute for male sexual liberation? How much admiration of fidelity do we see in the cultural attitudes of 1970? Today, a married man is not far from being considered only half a man, a married woman a moody, sullen trap . . . At the core of what I have seen in the women's movement is a painful crisis in the relations of the sexes that must be faced. If any form of marriage is to have contractual weight in the future, the bargain must be spelled out and struck afresh, for too many have become confused about its responsibilities and privileges, and pious exhortations to "grin and bear it" are only expressions of a callous refusal to confront the reality of a widely felt pain.

The disingenuousness of Miss Decter's approach is palpable. The young woman who "has everything" is, after all, not unique among favored beings in finding fault with what she has been given, and in wanting what she has been swindled out of discovering for herself: the students feel this too. . . . The *men* in her story are, except for the beastly lawyer (an anomaly), tasteful, gentle, and even-handed. To be sure, the college prof proves disappointing in bed (how classical!), but there are no scenes of sexual shock or anguish. There is no open or even covert prejudice toward women, even of the sort one hears every day and accepts with embarrassed complicity, so that the heroine's espousal of the movement is made to appear a response only to an irrational inner demand for perfection.

Now, a demand for perfection has often been thought ennobling for mankind as a whole. Why, then, not for women? That desire for freedom expressed at times inchoately by Women's Liberation Miss Decter deems childish in its charges against the world and in its lack of a "sense of responsibility." But what can be more responsible, ultimately, than to perceive what oppresses you and to call it by its name? Women have less genuine freedom to *become* in American society than in some other societies. Our stereotypes have so reduced that very sense of choice which Midge Decter thinks we all have in such abundance that we need to make war against them to restore us to ourselves. If freedom only "lies in one's enactment of it," and "can be granted only in theory," then Women's Liberation may represent the first attempt on the part of women in our culture to wrest the idea of freedom for themselves, and to discover a better basis for their relations to men than having to ask for gifts and favors while granting gifts and favors in return.

Miss Decter's vindictive attitude toward her passive girl protagonist reveals the bias of one who has comfortably internalized that prayer in which God is daily thanked for His goodness in not having created man a woman.

Madelyn Gutwirth
Haverford, Pennsylvania

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . Of course there are women who blame society for their own inadequacies, just as there are Jews who attribute setbacks to anti-Semitism and blacks who see white racism as the cause of their every difficulty. But does the existence of such individuals prove that there is no religious or racial discrimination?

. . . Like her "heroine," Miss Decter is not interested in the boring statistics. But those familiar with these statistics know that sex discrimination, like racial and religious discrimination, is a real and pressing problem. . . .

It has become fashionable in certain circles to label young social critics "cry-babies" whose overly-permissive upbringing has rendered them incapable of accepting reality (i.e., the war in Vietnam,

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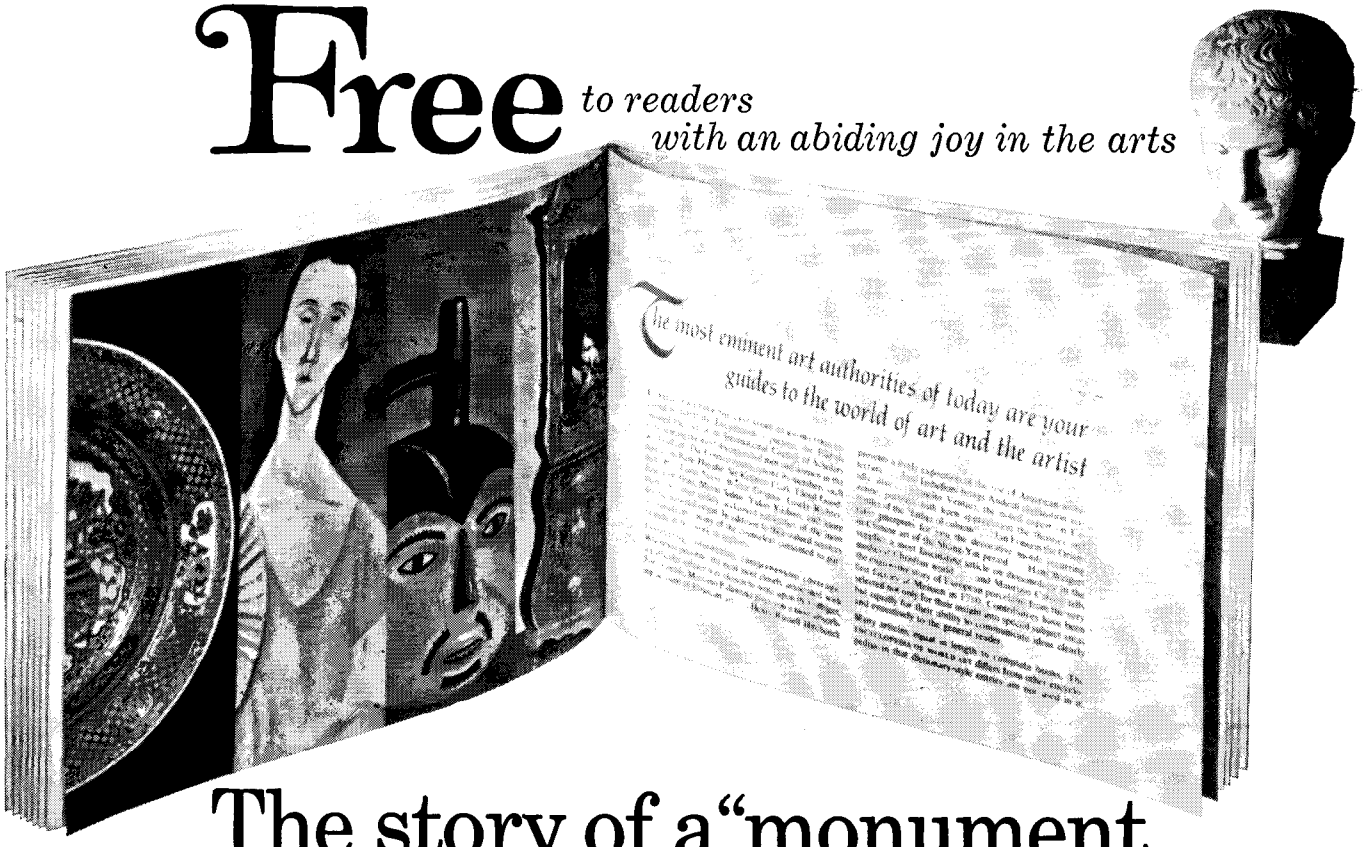

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pollution, discrimination, etc.). Surely people of all ages who devote their efforts to ending social ills do not deserve to be reviled as neurotics.

SARAH WERNICK LOCKERETZ
Mattapan, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I found Midge Decter's article highly provocative, so provocative, in fact, that I have left the breakfast dishes on the table and the beds unmade to raise some questions I have about it. First, what is wrong with reading and studying novels? Miss Decter speaks of the "liberated woman" as having trained herself "for a life of monied leisure in the study, say, of the English novel, only to find . . . [herself] bitter about being thought unqualified in spirit as well as training for valuable work." For Miss Decter, then, reading novels is a frivolous, vapid way of spending time. . . . I wonder what she considers "valuable work." Could teaching English qualify?

My second basic question is about male-female roles. The "liberated woman's" lover "demanded that he have clean shirts and a made bed." Miss Decter seems to accept this as right and proper. Yet both the "liberated woman" and her lover had jobs outside the home, and, presumably, both were paying money toward food and rent. Why then is it the woman's job to make the bed?

LAUREL H. RABIN
Baltimore, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Midge Decter asserts that "freedom is an end in itself, a value whose strongest connections are thus not with happiness but with responsibility." Surely Miss Decter must be speaking from the vacuum of her own experience and not from the context of 20th-century life-styles. In the first place, modern man, in his yen for freedom, avoids responsibility like the plague. "I didn't/don't want to get involved" should replace *E Pluribus Unum* as the U.S. motto.

In the second place, freedom today means being able to "do your own thing," that which makes you happy. The problem is only that we are all so hung-up that we don't know what makes us happy. Perhaps when we find out, then, and only then, will we *all* be liberated.

SHELDON BARRY GEWIRTZ
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . As a member of a small Women's Liberation group and a supporter of the movement, I find myself in a very parallel position to the one I found myself in ten years ago as a member of CORE. Two responses to CORE were typical in those years: "What do *they* want?," and "Yes, of course, I'm all for it but their methods! Don't they know they'll only alienate people with demonstrations?" How glad those critics of CORE would be now to bring back the age of peaceful picket lines, but it is too late. Today do we not hear the same shocked disapproval of Women's Liberation? Must intelligent people make the same mistake over and over again? Can't we learn from history before it is too late? There is a rage in women. It is true that the rage is being articulated by the most advantaged women but this should not come as a surprise—weren't the leaders of the NAACP the most advanced black people? . . .

Miss Decter's portrait of the girl who has everything certainly does not describe the women in my group, but I trust that the author has an example in mind. Isn't it typical for older women to see younger women as their enemies and to resent and put them down? One of the beautiful aspects of the movement to me is the real effort to break down the envy and jealousy among women which has afflicted our relationship with our sisters for so long. We have pitted ourselves against each other as sisters. Women must stop playing "Uncle Tom" to the male-dominated society, women must stop rushing to be the first to criticize Women's Liberation. Women must listen to each other, respect each other, and support each other.

CHARLOTTE KRAUSE
San Francisco, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I am a liberated woman, I work in the Women's Liberation movement with many others, and I do not recognize myself or my friends in Miss Decter's portrait of *the* liberated woman.

This article is condescending because it portrays the liberated woman as essentially a spoiled brat. The women whom I know and with whom I work are just the opposite. In spite of being trained from the cradle to fail at anything but motherhood or housewifery, we have chosen to work for a system of free and fair choice for all women. Those of us who chose a career in addition to marriage find ourselves unable to compete with men on our merits as individuals. In spite of Miss Decter's sermonizing at the end of her article, the fact is that bias based on sex pervades our society. A glance at the statistics from the U.S. Labor Department will show that Miss Decter is dead wrong: we in Women's Liberation do not choose freedom from responsibility, but freedom with responsibility. In other words, human rights.

Finally, let me assure Miss Decter, and anyone else who may be interested, although I can't see why, that many of us are very happily married to men who are truly and deeply committed to their wives as female human beings, and who are secure enough to accept their wives as people, not as objects or slaves.

EVA KASHKET
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have never met Midge Decter, but judging by the formidable manner with which she dismissed the liberated woman, I very much regret not being on her side.

I am moved to dissent publicly from her view, in spite of my expectation that many others will do the same, precisely because, like Miss Decter, I am outside the movement, if considerably more sympathetic to it. More important, I too have "made it," or at least I am in the process of "making it"; that is, I have also managed to juggle a career and a family. In generational terms I stand between Miss Decter's generation (I said I did not know her, not that I did not know of her) and if I am not as firmly established in my career as she is in hers and if my children are not as grown-up, within ten years or so I will, presumably, be in a comparable position. So much for my credentials.

The most startling, though not the most important, feature of her essay was its tone. It is one thing to view the members of a movement as spoiled princesses; it is quite another to play the mad queen and chop off their heads. If humor is in general a hostile way to look at the world, satire is its most virulent form. Miss Decter made some telling points, but the very structure of her essay reflected anger, which I sometimes share, and lack of compassion,

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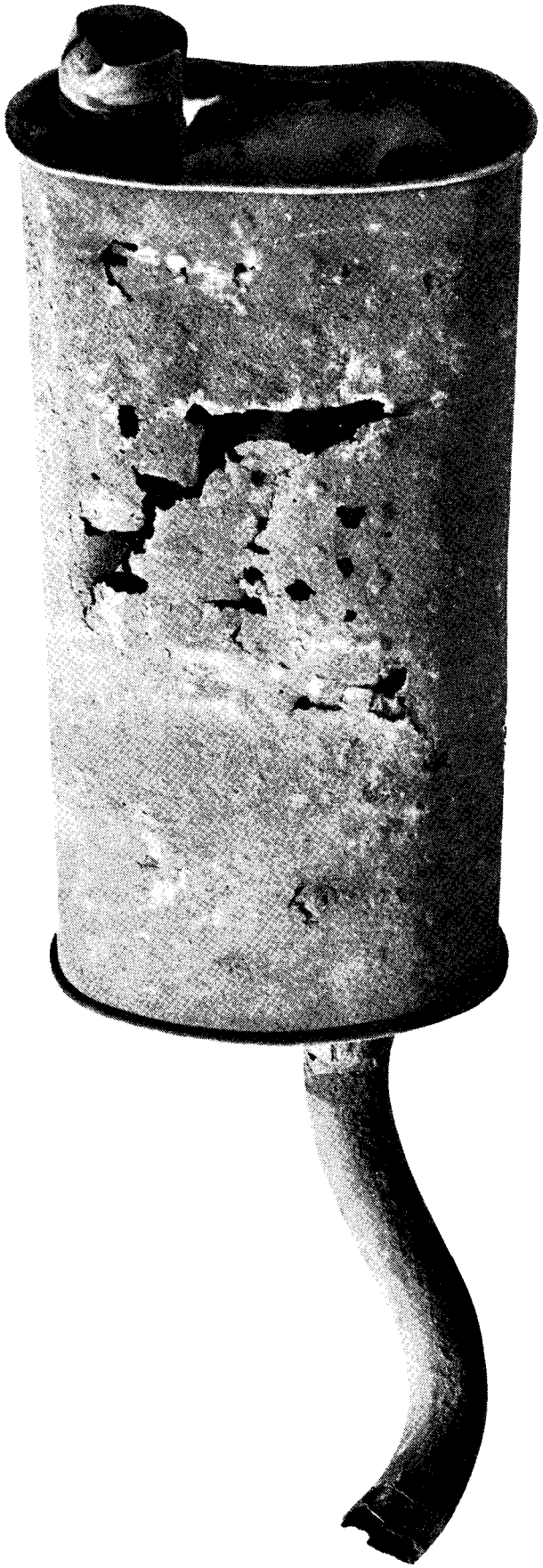

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which I do not. In the early Women's Liberation days I taught at one of the prestigious, Eastern, all-girls' colleges, and met and came to know well several of the indulged, self-centered, pleasure-oriented, undisciplined, self-important princesses she so cleverly described. And while many have those irritating qualities, they are, at the same time, fragile, directionless, searching, desperate young women. The problem of upper-middle-class women educated and trained for a world which makes no place for them, except for temporary busy-work, is hardly new. More than fifty years ago Jane Addams spoke feelingly of young people with all of the advantages of wealth, of college, of European travel, but for whom "uselessness hangs about them heavily." Jane Addams is a good example of a serious social thinker particularly attuned to the problems of young people and women who was able to combine her searing social criticism with a genuine concern for the ones she was criticizing. She has one of Miss Decter's princesses, or rather her grandmother, saying some sixty years ago (although the implication of Miss Decter's piece is that our child-rearing habits have produced a new breed of bratty girls): "You do not know what life means when all the difficulties are removed. I am simply smothered and sickened with advantages. It is like eating a sweet dessert the first thing in the morning."

An even earlier reflection of Jane Addams, appearing in 1893, deserves fuller quotation here: "It is inevitable that those who feel more keenly this insincerity and partial living should be our young people, our so-called educated young people . . . who bear the brunt of being cultivated into undernourished, over-sensitive lives. I have seen young girls suffer and grown sensibly lowered in vitality in the first years after they leave school. In our attempt to give a girl pleasure and freedom from care we succeed, for the most part, in making her pitifully miserable. She finds 'life' so different from what she expected it to be. She . . . does not understand this apparent waste of herself, this elaborate preparation, if no work is provided for her. . . . Society smiles at [her] indulgently instead of making [her] of value to itself."

Here are the earlier versions of the same little princesses but viewed in a larger social context and viewed with sympathy by an observer who knew that their plight was substantial.

Nevertheless, Miss Decter has the right not to like or care about anybody she chooses not to like or care about. Misrepresenting a total movement is something else again. While the women's movement, like almost all reform movements in our history, is essentially middle class in personnel and program, it is not composed solely or even largely of the upper-middle-class ladies whose portrait she drew. The women's movement has elicited an enormous response . . . from within both the middle class and the lower-middle class: students in my classes at a state university, drawn from a wide range of backgrounds; typists and secretaries and clerks in the working world who must, and do, grub for a living; young mothers in my local community—all are increasingly attracted to the women's movement, if perhaps reluctantly and critically. There are even occasional ripplings of working-class response, particularly as the activists come increasingly to recognize the limitations of their essentially middle-class, and white, program.

But it is not Miss Decter's hostile stance in relation to the women's movement which disturbs me most, nor even her arbitrary selection of a segment of the movement which she then somehow, without quite saying it, passes off as representative. It is the way she went about her analysis to which most attention should be directed.

The problem as Miss Decter poses it is an individual one and the solution is similarly an individual one. Within the context of the individual problem, she suggests it is also a matter of personal maladjustment. American historians have played that game on and off for years. We have described the Populists as paranoid and anti-Semitic, we have waved off the Abolitionists as a group of status seekers, we have explained away John Brown as a madman, and then we have come to realize that this kind of reasoning, while it has some value and may even be accurate, manages to evade the central questions. Miss Decter has apparently found her private solution, as I have mine, but these are more-or-less satisfactory personal answers to a larger social concern. If I have been able to sustain a career and a family simultaneously it is because I have been fortunate enough to have a sympathetic husband and because I have been able to share most of the household responsibilites with another woman. It is not a solution that can be projected into the social arena. It is the Jackie Robinson-Ralph Bunche syndrome again. If they made it, what are the rest of the blacks complaining about?

The problems the women's movement raises have no easy answers, for they ultimately confront the major matter of family and child-rearing, and no women's movement in history has thus far coped adequately, in my opinion, with that set of problems. The respected and extraordinary women who presided over their 18th-century salons did so on the basis of wealth and class, both of which depended on their husbands' positions. Jane Addams and her circle of talented and active women chose public careers over private ones and typically remained unmarried and childless. Now for the first time in history it is possible for larger numbers of women to sustain a vision of a fuller life than has hitherto been possible. It is in the context of rising expectations confronted by frustrating obstacles that Miss Decter should have developed her analysis. Her preaching gets us to a kind of inapplicable Puritan admonition to work hard, shape up, and stop whining. Her supercilious comment that both men and women have choices is reminiscent of Anatole France's observation that it is forbidden equally to the rich and to the poor to sleep under the bridges across the Seine.

The emphasis on the maladjusted individual woman obscures the possibility of a penetrating analysis of the assumptions of the women's movement. For example, there persists throughout her article the nagging assumption that boys and girls are different, that men and women are different, and it is the weakness of our princess that prevents her from dealing with the difference. Indeed, I share the assumption that men and women are different. To say that women are just men with different plumbing, as has been said to me repeatedly, is, aside from the inelegant language, hardly ac-

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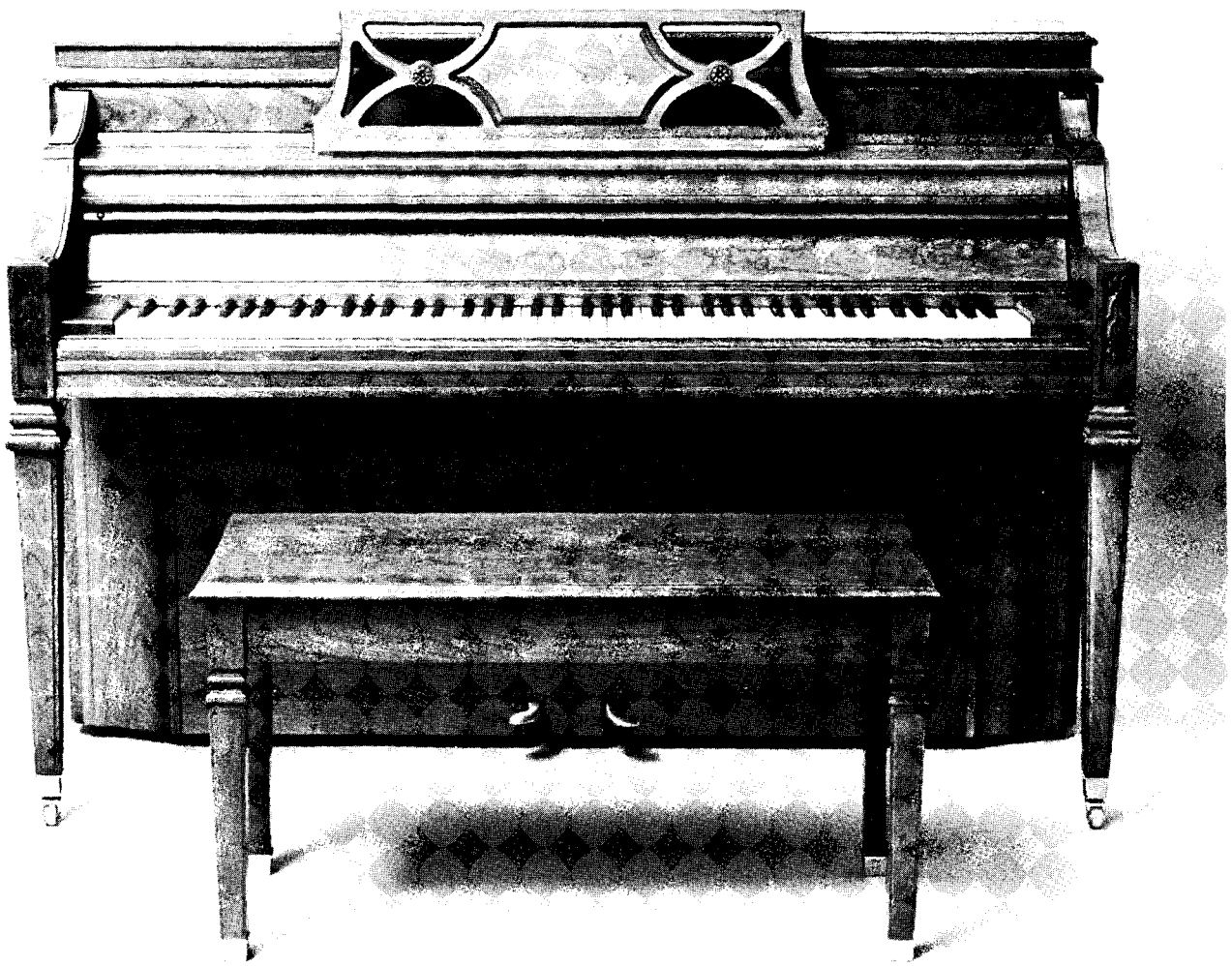

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curate. Whatever the differences are between men and women, however, they are clearly *not* along lines of who can better do the ironing, make the beds, and cook the dinner, as Miss Decter's article suggests; by thus casting her argument on a personal level, she is prevented from examining seriously the larger implications of her criticism. The women's movement has made an invaluable contribution by underscoring the ways in which psychologists, anthropologists, sociologists, historians, and psychiatrists have, in general, ignored or never seriously examined the genetic or biological differences between men and women and the relation of those differences to cultural definitions.

It is when Miss Decter examines the question of so-called sexual freedom that her effort to define a social movement in terms of limited personal biography is exposed. She asserts that our princess now claims "that it was precisely the possibility to have a wide sexual experience that constituted the major block to women's equality." This is not at all what the militant young women claim. By viewing the problem as an aspect of a single woman's history, albeit a fictionalized history, the entire social dimension is lost; the problem, as Miss Decter defines it, is reduced to a matter of the individual psyche. More precisely, it is seen as a matter of ingratitude on the part of young women for the tolerant and accepting views of their mothers. What Miss Decter does not recognize is that in this empty, consumption society, where all forms of human relations are reduced to commodities, everyone suffers, but especially women. This vaunted sexual revolution might be more clearly viewed not *only* as a liberation from earlier sexual inhibitions but also as a further indication of how even intimate relations between men and women are demeaned. The relaxation of previous sexual mores has made it clearer to many women what their real role has been.

When Miss Decter drops the protection of satiric attack and deals directly with her position, she gives her game away. Having criticized young women for not knowing how to deal with their real freedom, she then concedes that marriage is indeed, as the women's movement has been saying, a contract in which, she rather quaintly says, the "man forgoes the operations of his blind boyhood lust and agrees to undertake the support and protection of a family, and receives in exchange the ease and comfort of home." If marriage is a contractual arrangement, then it is eminently reasonable for one of the partners to reopen negotiations and attempt to equalize and humanize the contract. Her assumption of contract is at the same time in conflict with her earlier notion that the family represents the "very place meant to be a haven from enemies." And I believe she is right in both definitions, for the family has served simultaneously in both capacities —as a haven where affectionate and loving relations reside and as a depository for a contract, a historically unequal contract. The women's movement has tended not to recognize the first function in its understandable but unbalanced challenge to the second. The militant women may ultimately prove the validity of their case, that the liberation of women is inevitably tied to the breakup of the family and the social rearing of children, but I am not yet convinced that the family cannot be completely redirected to be what we claim it has been. Such a restructuring will, however, have to come with a general restructuring of social priorities to eliminate the centrality of the marketplace in human relations and to permit real sharing between men and women of the pleasures and duties of the home and children. Such a view is also compatible with the premises of much of the women's movement. If the militant women have yet to define clearly what is meant by freedom for men and women, they are groping toward such a definition.

A glance at the history of the women's movement reveals that the current claims that marriage is legalized prostitution, that women are bred to be objects of consumption, and that women are forced to struggle with the duality of being both woman and person in a society that demands a choice —all have been echoed by earlier generations. The women's movement began with a demand for basic political and legal rights and then later demanded that women have equal access with men to the job market. It became clear that women could not compete effectively so long as they were also primarily responsible for the household and the children. Miss Decter's suggestion that the solution rests with changing our child-rearing habits so that little girls are not raised to be self-indulgent women is a most shallow appraisal of a serious social problem. The women's movement has its share, as all reform movements have, of neurotics and fools. It is easy, and dishonest, to pretend to deal with the movement as a whole by focusing on these elements. The women's movement has challenged the value of our most cherished institutions; it has raised searching questions which have forced many men and women to reexamine their attitudes and actions. If it has not come up with altogether satisfactory answers, neither has anybody else, and it is now the appropriate moment to drop our defenses and deal honestly and directly with its challenge.

ANN J. LANE
Department of History
Douglass College
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . The real locus of the Women's Liberation movement is to be found not in the public and rather flamboyant organizations of women in their early and middle twenties but rather in the quiet, often unorganized efforts of women over thirty to achieve a sense of respected personhood and meaningful activity in their lives. On the whole these women did not grow up with a sense of ease as divine right. They are faced with such real problems as restricted opportunity for work and unequal reward for performance. Most of all they face the disquieting realization of a grossly unequal distribution of power in most marriages.

Miss Decter is right when she says that we now all enjoy "the freedom to make certain choices and take the consequences." However, I doubt whether this is a "freedom granted [women] by society." It seems more to be a basic element of the human condition available at all times to all men and women. But while the freedom may exist, in our society the consequences of the same choice are different for men and women. Overcoming the difficulties may ennoble an individual woman, but it does not justify aban-

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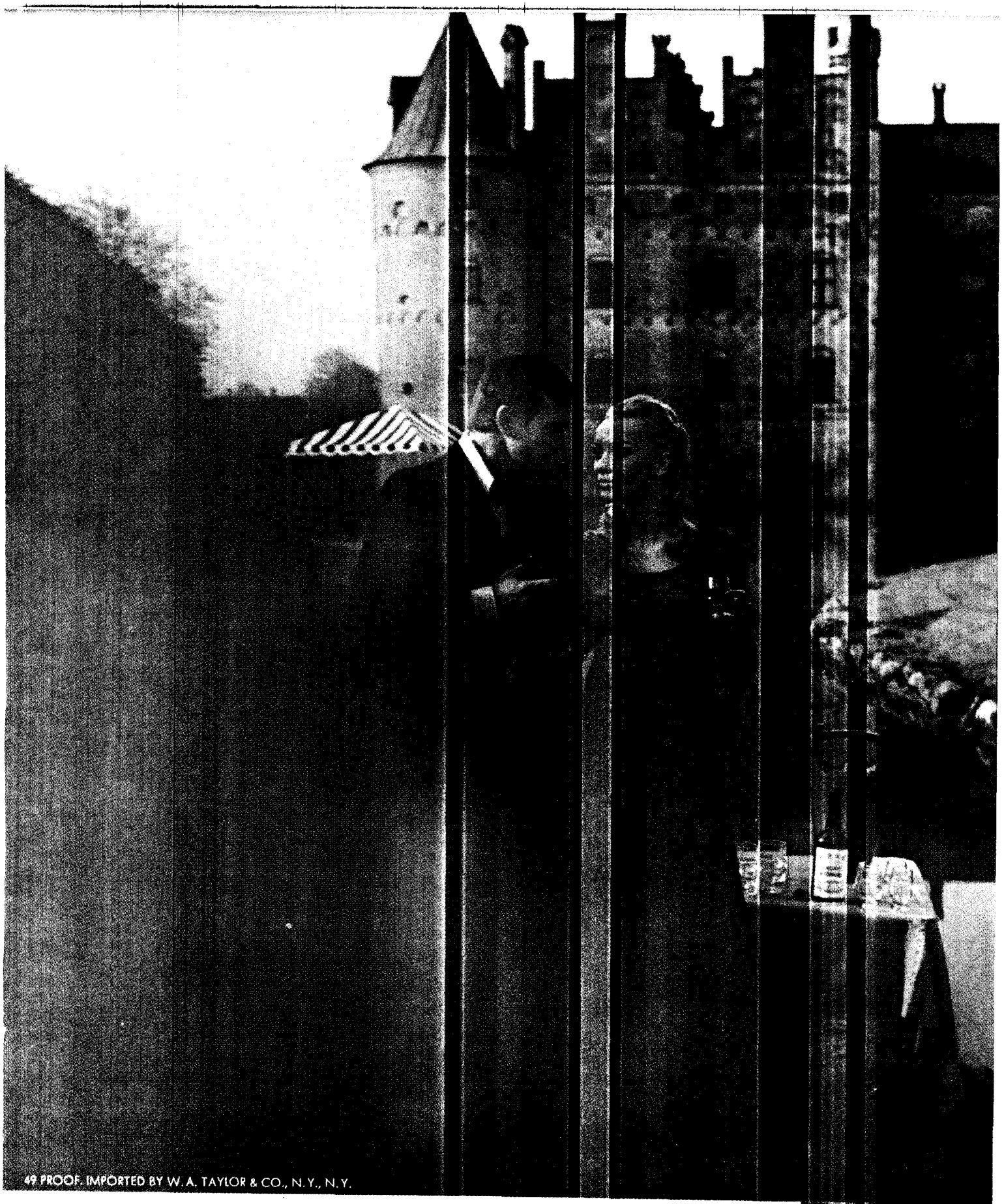

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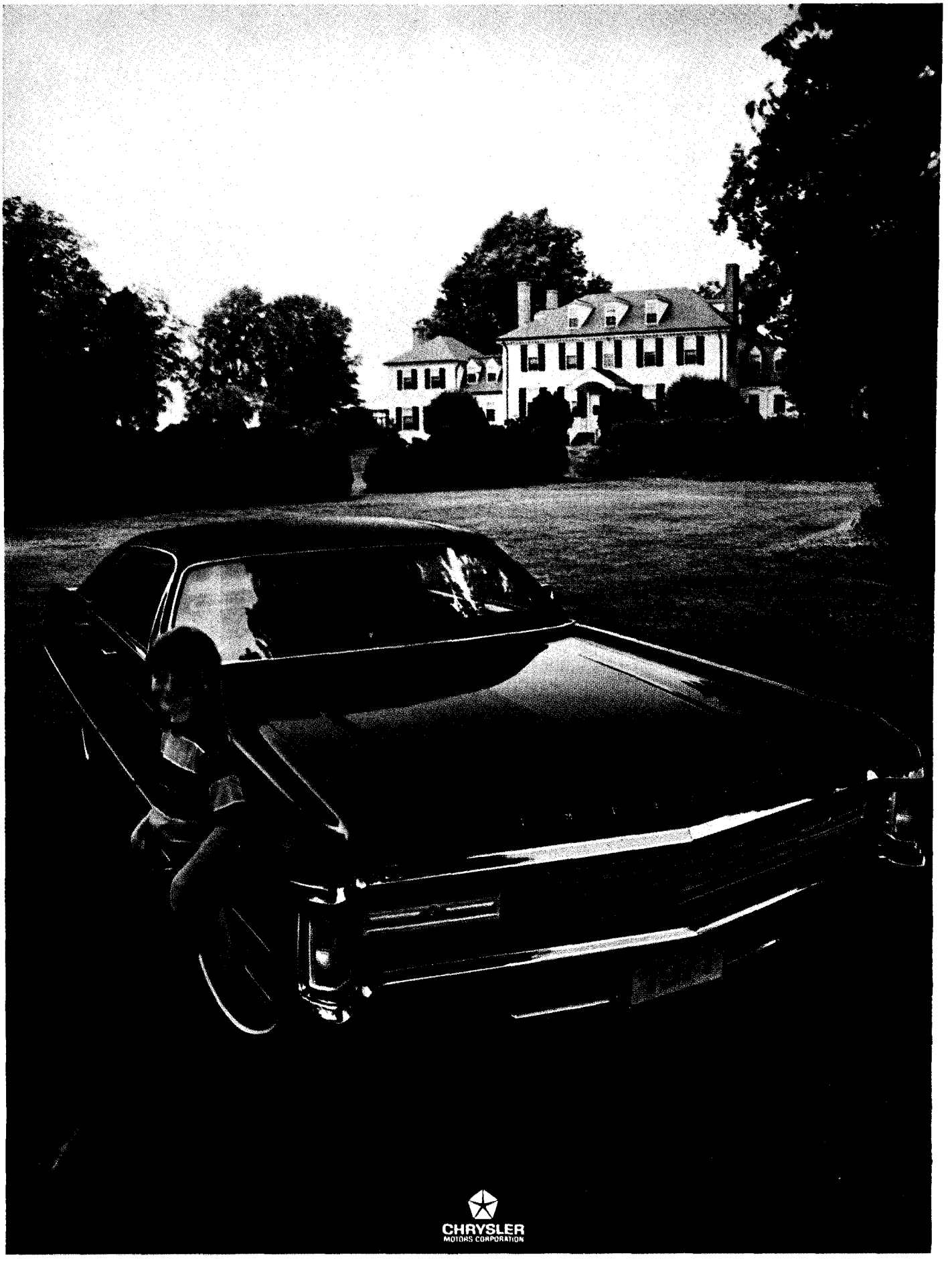

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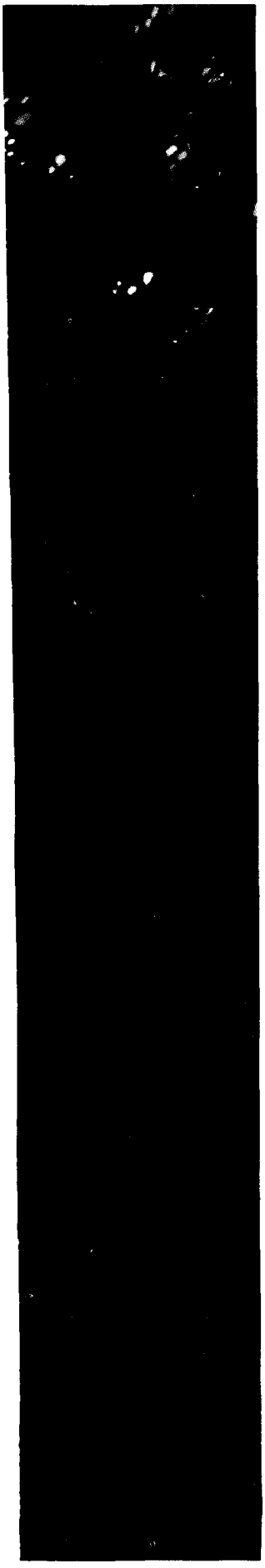

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doning the attempt to rectify the inequalities which apply to women as a class. To hold the contrary, as Miss Decter appears to do, is to indulge in a kind of sophisticated Uncle Tomism. . . .

RABBI STEPHEN FORSTEIN
Topeka, Kansas

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . The "liberated" woman portrayed by Midge Decter is the product of an extraordinarily privileged, enlightened upbringing and education. As a result, Miss Decter concludes she is merely a spoiled child who refuses to accept the reality that life is difficult. Although I frankly doubt that even progressive private schools and "modern" parents have been as free of role stereotypes and sexually-differentiated expectations as Miss Decter suggests, I was also irked by the assumption that most of the women in Women's Lib come from this kind of overprivileged background; we do not *all* belong to Miss Decter's intellectually elite New York clique. (These people always think they are "everyone who counts.") Furthermore, a woman with such an upbringing would still have to cope with the images of womanhood presented in the news media, films, fiction, and so on. Such a fairy princess would indeed suffer from inconsistent conditioning and her head would be in a frightful muddle.

Of course, most women in the Women's Liberation movement are middle-class, but that usually means something far more earthbound than the world inhabited by the fairy princess: it means an upbringing riddled with the confusion which comes from implicitly expressed but nonetheless straitjacketing conceptions of femininity together with a rhetoric of individual fullfillment. The class character of Women's Lib only proves again the validity of the concept of the "revolution of rising expectations." Offer people a glimpse of the possibility of real self-fullfillment and they will know enough to resent being degraded, cheated, and manipulated.

Anyway, my main objection to the article is that Miss Decter does not know the first thing about the ideology of the women's movement. She seems to think women want what men have—status and money (but without having to work for it). She couldn't be more wrong. Although Women's Lib insists that women who work have a right to their just rewards, far more profoundly, the movement is questioning the most fundamental values of the society: achievement glorified as the goal of life; competition which colors every human interaction; individualism carried so far that it leads to isolation; sex as ego-gratification instead of tenderness and mutual pleasure; meaningless work accepted as fair exchange for money and status; rigid role conceptions which violate the self. . . . I could go on and on. The end result of all of the above is alienated and manipulative human relations.

Women are beginning to feel that this way of life is "masculine." Certainly women do compete, use sex to enhance their egos, fail to "see" other people except as objects, etc., but because, to a large extent, they have been excluded from the central arenas of society, they do so to a lesser degree than men and can more readily extricate themselves from such habits of mind. This is what we are trying to do in our collectives. Basically Miss Decter's problem is that she totally fails to grasp the *radical* assumptions of the movement.

She implies in the article that the liberated woman does not recognize that she is different from men and wants fundamentally different things. On the contrary—the beautiful thing that is happening to women these days is that they are, for the first time, genuinely embracing their womanliness. The very qualities in themselves which they previously scorned—their sensitivity to the dynamics of human interaction, their emotional perceptiveness . . . these are now being recognized as strengths. No longer do women feel compelled to strive to be more rational, more abstract, more "masculine" in their thinking. . . .

The kind of liberated woman I know wants men to develop more multi-dimensionally too. We don't think our advantages are innate. We feel that when a human being, male or female, is forced to conform to a role, part of her (his) true nature is denied. We are *all* capable of objectivity and subjectivity, logic, and intuition. And we are all capable of honest human interaction, rare as it is in our patriarchal society.

To get back to Midge Decter's article: she argues that it is women who have wanted marriage and children and have therefore forced men to discipline their non-selective lusts. Has she never noticed that women can also lust in a random manner? And how can she forget that women have demanded marriage because without it they have been, until recently, economically helpless, and even today are stigmatized as rejects to be pitied or ridiculed? Near the end of her essay she suggests that if a woman wishes not to be a sexual object, she may refrain from involvement, setting her own "price" for sexual complicity. In a culture where a woman without a man is a sick nonentity, in a society where a woman writing about Women's Liberation can assume that merely finding a congenial lover would constitute a happy ending fit for a fairy princess, it is obviously naive to suggest that an individual woman declare her sexual independence. However, this is precisely what women are now becoming courageous enough to do—because they are beginning to have the strength which comes from sisterhood.

Because women are growing strong together, it is now becoming possible to refrain from relationships which deny the *mutual* humanity of the so-called lovers. But this is not our ultimate goal. I think that most women in the movement still cherish the hope that men too will recognize that their humanity is deeper and more multifaceted than the sex role they have been forced into, and will join with women in working toward true liberation.

LINDA C. HUNT
University of Massachusetts
Boston, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"The Liberated Woman" is an immoral and ridiculously off-base piece. And even though the piece bears Midge Decter's name it smacks so entirely of COMMENTARY's view of the contemporary world that my unmistakable impression is that it was written in the magazine's editorial rooms. . . . Every time COMMENTARY sets out to observe any of the numerous and, God knows, legitimate social-protest movements that are tearing our lives apart, it ends up sounding like a Jewish mother, arms folded across fat breasts, mouth compressed into fat face, saying: "After everything I've done for you, *this* is what I get back!" For, in the view of fat and self-satisfied COMMENTARY, what is behind all

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"SCANDINAVIANS PAY HEAVY TAXES AND FREAK OUT ON SEX."

"FRENCHMEN SWIM IN WINE AND THROW PAVING STONES."

"THE BRITISH ARE DRY AND WITTY AND LONDON SWINGS."

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the social stirrings, all the churning and screaming and profound injustice thousands of people feel characterize their daily existences, is merely the dissatisfactions of a handful of ungrateful and maladjusted middle-class children. . . . What on earth can one actually say to such a wealth of painfully threatened reaction?

VIVIAN GORNICK
The Village Voice
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . In spite of Midge Decter's intellectual achievements and status in a male-dominated society, her opening paragraph indicates an unliberated attitude. I thought at first that the fairy who bestowed good looks upon the heroine was a put-on meant by the author to show up some of the attitudes of the male society which would be overcome by the heroine as she became liberated. To show how an attractive woman, who is in a position to exploit the exploiters, awakens to the male views which dominate our society, would have made an all the more telling point. Unfortunately, it was not the author's intent to have the sleeping beauty awaken, only to have her stir restively a few times and grumble in her sleep.

Miss Decter makes her heroine a woman who is financially dependent on her parents and lovers. It is no wonder then that she cannot refute even the weakest arguments raised by her lover. When he argues that "as a husband he would still be expected to be the breadwinner," it would be reasonable to expect that she would explain to him that this is a patently false argument and against everything Women's Liberation is trying to accomplish. But Miss Decter's heroine could not do this because she is certainly not a liberated woman. She is not concerned with any of the positive goals of the movement, only with its revelation of male exploitation of women which she uses as an excuse for her own unhappiness and status. When her lover next argues that he is "the one not permitted to cry" there isn't the slightest hint that advocates of Women's Liberation believe that men need liberation from their prescribed roles in our society as well as women.

One statement in particular made by the author seems very much out of place in a magazine like COMMENTARY: "And who would not, enjoying something less than divine happiness, be soothed and excited by the idea that he [*sic*] was indeed a victim?" That there might be some psychological basis for this masochistic conclusion does not mean that it is a major motivational factor in the Women's Liberation movement. The statement could, with equal lack of meaningful value, be applied to the black liberation movement or even to the Zionist movement. . . .

STUART OPOTOWSKY
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

My immediate response to "The Liberated Woman" is that this is surely the last word on the subject: what is there left to say?

Miss Decter, it seems to me, has touched on her anti-heroine's every weakness and on the reasons why she is so particularly vulnerable. The main weakness being her inability to equate love—fondly thought of as something neatly abstract—with responsibility, certainly today's dirtiest word.

I accept Miss Decter's laying partial blame on the heroine's well-meaning parents, who lack the firmness and sense to be firm and sensible. However, there is another force, which Miss Decter somewhat slights, working equally hard to make her such a tough and irrational cookie, bringing on, in turn, a manifest discrimination against women by men.

This force is her tendency to play games with her sexual power—a power far more complex and potentially more dangerous than a man's. Men don't use sex as a weapon nearly so often as women do. Women use it constantly. Because they can withhold in a wide variety of emotional as well as physical ways, they can easily dominate and undermine men by refusing to "give" unless there's something in it for them.

The fact that a lot of women are willing to play around with their sexual powers makes them fools.

No man is going to take this sort of thing lying down—or perhaps I should say standing up. A man's only way of getting back at a woman who threatens to wound him by making a deal out of sex instead of letting it be an expression of mutual admiration, is to keep her in her place, pay her less, refuse to promote her or accept her in his institutions, businesses, and clubs; refuse to drink with her, and, in cases of extreme distress, even to eat with her.

Who can say how their rejection reflex began? Did men start oppressing women when women converted sex into something sinisterly useful, or did women start using sex when they discovered it to be their best weapon against a hostile world of men?

Even if we don't know the answer to that one, we *do* know that those liberated women who believe that men have a monopoly on sexual power, have it all twisted. It's they themselves who wield the greatest power. If anybody should be called a sexist—awful word—it is the female. Maybe, after all, it's just as well that Miss Decter's nameless lady hasn't yet got wise.

ANNE BERNAYS KAPLAN
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Midge Decter's "The Liberated Woman" is not only sensible—all of her stuff is—but a virtuoso performance. It is the best I have read on the topic, exceeding the only other good essay in breadth and reach.

ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Sincere congratulations for publishing Midge Decter's article. For those of us who are both "professional" and "liberated" women, but who are not enchanted with Women's Lib, this essay has expressed much of what we have been trying to say about why we are not a part of the movement. My own standard riposte to questioners has been that I want to get my next job "because I am, not because I am a woman." This has evoked hostility from women who charge me either with insensitivity to my own "enslavement" or with a lack of sympathy for those women who have not been as "successful" or "lucky" as I. Like some of the men in Miss Decter's article, I too applaud the efforts of the Women's Liberation movement to secure "equal pay for equal work" and so forth. But also like Midge Decter, I deplore the confusion of such basic rights with the insecurities of life in modern society. If you haven't "made it" look first to yourself. Only after a long hard look are you entitled to wonder whether your sex is part of the reason for your failure.

IRENE TAVISS
Cambridge, Massachusetts

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

At last, a realistic, lucid, penetrating analysis of the headlong fall of the American woman toward "liberation." . . . It made me shudder again at the innocence and energy with which so many women are fighting to disenfranchise themselves and prove beyond a doubt that "man's best friend is his dog."

Miss Decter picks her way so smoothly through the last forty years of changing values and aspirations, properly noting when change was progress, that the ultimate victory seems inevitable. Woman will surely liberate herself totally and achieve absolute freedom from intimate or lasting human relationships, from any personal commitments in a life devoid of emotional and sexual gratification.

MANYA STARR

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It's risky to elaborate on another person's archetype, but I see something incomplete in Midge Decter's "The Liberated Woman"—otherwise a superb piece, and badly needed. Miss Decter's dismal young woman is indeed sick and silly; her emotional polarization is, indeed, diverting Women's Lib from practical goals; but it's not all her fault. It's partly her mother's—who, I suspect, never taught her to take care of herself. Her mother's generation (mine) must be unique, in history and in nature, for neglecting this duty. Not many of us have taught our children (boys *or* girls) the essential skills: keeping one's home, self, accounts, etc., in order. These things have to be done, however minimally—and done efficiently if there's to be time for "real life." Why did we cook their meals and sew on their buttons, and never teach them to do it and do it right? Not just because we were lazy. We had learned to treat the necessary evil of housework as a humiliation, a bad area for contact with our children.

As Miss Decter *does* point out, her archetype chose an education for leisure, not to prepare for a job; but I doubt, when that Sarah Lawrence (or wherever) catalogue arrived, that her mother ventured to remark that Comp. Lit. 104 butters no parsnips. And earlier, when the archetype was at school, I suspect adjustment, not achievement (with its evil hint of

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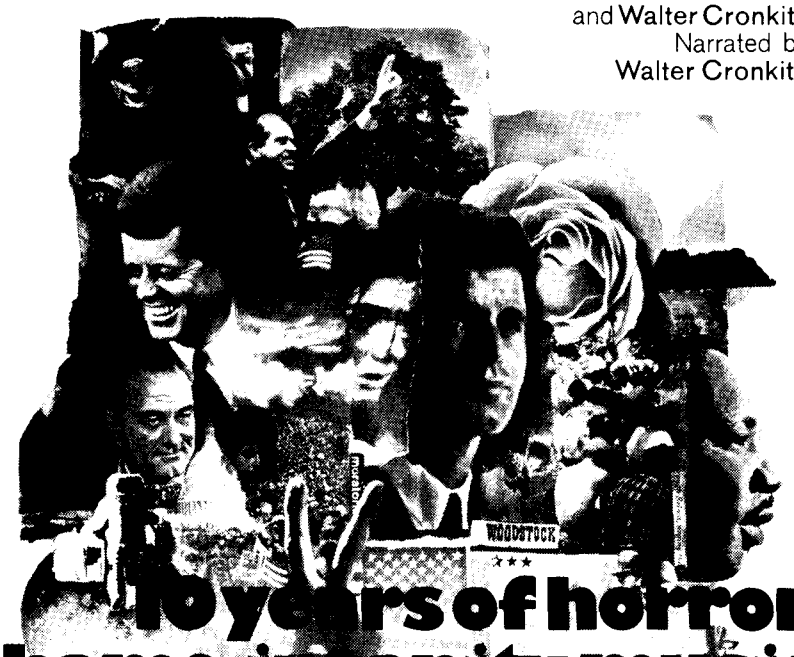

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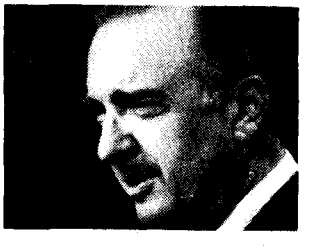

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"competition"), was the goal. Everywhere, the young woman seems to have been denied both competence and self-reliance.

A point about that lady senior editor: even if her pay *were* fair (mine is, if that's relevant), if she had children she wouldn't have broken even for years. Child-care expenses for married working women are not tax-deductible at a practical level. (The IRS rule is: If joint income is less than $6000, expenses up to $600 for the care of one child, up to $900 for two or more, can be deducted if both parents work. A single woman can deduct similarly for the care of any child for whom she is responsible, notwithstanding her income level. A single man can deduct similarly . . . and at any income level.) Only an indifferent mother will confide her children to an 8-AM-to-6-PM day-care center (and when they're sick, what?). Only a very devoted husband can resist treating his wife's income-reducing job as her hobby. And only a very determined (or rich) woman can stay *that* course.

ESTHER S. YNTEMA
Atlantic Monthly Press
Boston, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Midge Decter's article seems to me a most beautifully done study of the state of mind of a corn-fed member of the middle classes, but it might be written about a middle-class man instead of a middle-class woman. I call it a masterpiece in its analysis of that unisex situation, but I feel that it does not touch on the resentments, some unjustified but justified, which make for female discontent.

REBECCA WEST
London, England

MIDGE DECTER writes:

To MacDonald S. Moore: Are you saying it is not true that today's highly educated, ambitious working girl tends to hook her ambition to the issue of status rather than money? Or merely that it was not nice of me to say so? It may, as you indicate, be popular to "explain the dynamics of social reform by referring to the status problems of reformers" but not nearly so popular as it has become to discredit an observation through the twin agencies of false analogy and the unexamined assumption of virtue. The question of what it is that Women's Liberation "programs" actually signify was precisely one of the things I was attempting to analyze; thus the validity of these "programs," especially for those who like yourself demand "research," ought not to be quite so confidently asserted. Let me in turn offer *you* a bit of homework: read a pamphlet entitled "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm"; it may be obtained by application to one or another of the several offices of the movement called Women's Liberation. If it should be unavailable, I shall be happy to recommend at least half a dozen others.

To Barbara F. Lefcowitz: Ideals always transcend the pursuits of those who claim to be their adherents; that is why ideals are such good things to have. And movements—especially and most conveniently when taken in their "widest" sense—always try to incorporate as many of the above as will fit onto one mimeograph stencil; that is why movements are such good things to lead. And speaking of misconceptions, I wish to point out that it was the demands of women in the 20's and 30's—those whose vantage point you would welcome—particularly their sexual demands, to which I was referring in speaking of male submission. They were demands that—however well-intentioned were both their having been pressed and their having been acceded to—have not in their realization brought women happiness as advertised. Where did the notion of "constricting attitudes" and "mothers" come from? Nowhere did I exculpate men for anything on the ground that their mothers made them do it; I suspect that you yourself may have been more tainted by "sexist" ideology than you realize. On the other hand, ought not a defender of women's equality hold women at least equally responsible for their own "pernicious values"? Or are women not yet fully human enough to have any?

To Sue Wimmershoff-Caplan: I am at something of a loss to imagine what piece is being responded to by your letter: certainly not the one I wrote. I did, to be sure, say that the freedom granted to women is remarkably equal to that enjoyed by men. I went further and characterized that freedom as the freedom to struggle, impose their will, take their licks, win their victories, and pay without too much special pleading for both or either of the latter. I will even, though in truth I find it an immoral one, let the analogy with the blacks stand. But surely a member of the New York Women's Bar Association should be capable of making a distinction between freedom and equality of pay, unfair as the failure of certain groups to have attained the latter might be. For what is the former if not, among many other things, the opportunity to do battle against the latter? How would you have characterized the white American working-class male at the turn of the century? Surely as "discriminated against in all areas of public life, in training for the professions, and in all but the lowliest levels of employment." But not, as the present existence of the labor movement will testify, as a man without freedom. Let us once and for all, in the very name of the equity you seek, stop muddying the word.

To Esther Soretsky: It is under the circumstances a bit difficult for me to discuss the *machismo* of today's intellectual male. Let me just say that I have encountered the phenomenon—indeed I have. Nothing I can think of is more congenial to the yearning to be nurtured and nurture.

Mary Lee Geisser raises a further problem of "freedom"; that it does not, as I have defined it, constitute the same set of choices for women as for men. A man may pursue a career and a family with no conflict but a woman often cannot. The list of differences is a good deal longer than that (to cite just a few): a man, for instance, enjoys the freedom to be deemed a failure if he fails in his career, and his wife does not; a man has the further freedom to deal with the issue of self-respect almost totally in terms of his daily contention with the world, and his wife does not; last but not least, a man has the freedom to be impotent, and his wife does not. Moreover, if a woman were to pursue a career with diligence without neglecting her children, she would, quite simply, not be guilty of neglecting her children. Such a woman would no doubt have to be more efficient and energetic than some others; on the other hand, if she were to be a nuclear physicist she would have to be smarter, if a model, prettier, or if a longshoreman,

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stronger. There is no movement which can twist life so as to give everyone a start at the same gate. Those who claim to constitute such a movement will one day, I am afraid, pay a terrible toll for their disrespect.

To Gayle Hollander: I imagine the editor mentioned my children in the author's note because he thought they might have some relevance to the particular subject at hand. As for your execrable manners toward me and my children, and most particularly toward my colleague Sally Kempton—whom you have not only the literary insensitivity to imagine as the source of my essay but the further egregious bad taste, having so imagined, to mention by name—as for these manners, I can only express my belief that the young woman in question (in your subtle and elegant terminology, a "pampered little bitch") would never, never be guilty of them.

To Mrs. Solomon: Can it be only two short years since there was public discourse, even disagreement, without reference to Spiro T. Agnew? Whatever did people who wished to have things both ways *do* before the golden era of the Nixon administration?

To Jeanne S. Binstock: A fairy princess! Words fail me.

To Madelyn Gutwirth: I agree with you that we are undergoing a crisis in the relations between the sexes. In my opinion, this crisis has to do with many large and as yet unassimilated developments: birth control; the gradual undermining of the traditional economic basis for marriage; the lifting of sanction from the values of chastity and fidelity without any provision for a viable alternative; the transformation of sex from a God-given and inevitable to a seemingly voluntary activity. But that is a subject for another time. I agree with you that the Women's Liberation movement is a symptom of that crisis—also its exacerbator. But how can a contract be renegotiated if one of the parties refuses to recognize even its retroactive existence and thus refuses to be bound by it? If the least chattelized women in the history of civilization announce themselves to be mere chattels, are they not really announcing their determination to accept no responsibility

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for their condition, past, present, *and* future? There is by all means something more responsible than "to perceive what oppresses you and to call it by its name," and that is to determine to live without the sickly comforts and indulgences—and excuses—of the claim to having an oppressor when one has none. An oppressor is not the same thing as a problem; the latter may press for solution, the former only serves to vindicate and perpetuate one's resentful, and therefore in the deepest sense unproductive, behavior.

To Sarah Wernick Lockeretz: Does the existence of real social problems in the world prove that there are no crybabies?

To Laurel H. Rabin: Reading novels is extremely valuable; I might even go so far as to say that reading great novels is essential to any properly-trained mind. And teaching English is certainly most valuable. OK? But what has that to do with the fact that thousands of English majors are turned out of our universities each year who become bitter at the discovery that there are very few interesting jobs on the job market—apart from teaching English—that this education has qualified them to do? (I will leave out the question of whether they are actually quite as educated as they have been led to believe.) I must ask you as I asked Mr. Moore: Is it the fact you are decrying, or my having mentioned it? As far as making the bed is concerned, I plead guilty to thinking it right and proper that a woman should do so. *Somebody* has to make the bed—just as somebody has to do each of all the other joyless tasks in this world. Why is there so much fuss, so much insistence on the problem of "roles," over these perfectly simple and practical reciprocal services men and women do for one another? Is one really to take such a problem seriously? Except that it is a serious matter, in the sense of being seriously suspect, when women announce—as they do repeatedly in Women's Liberation literature, though usually in reference to washing the dishes—that the everyday chores assigned to them are "degrading." The question, in Socratic form, is: Are they degrading because they're women's work, or are they women's work because they are degrading? A truly liberated woman, I imagine, like a truly liberated—i.e., self-respecting and self-valuing—person would manage to spend the two minutes required for the making of a bed without feeling humiliated and devalued by it.

To Sheldon Barry Gewirtz: I am grateful to be considered exempt from something as onerous-sounding as a "20th-century life style"—even at the cost of being consigned to the vacuum that must, alas, be my own experience.

To Charlotte Krause: You seem to be implying that one should appreciate the current Women's Liberation movement because there may come a time of escalated violence when we will be driven to look back on this moment as one of moderation. "There is a rage in women." But what if the rage is not being addressed to its own true source? A movement is after all not merely a set of tactics; it is also and most importantly a set of *ideas*. And if they are false ideas, or sometimes even just falsely expressed ideas, they do great, perhaps enduring, harm. I ask you to consider whether the sad history of CORE was not the outcome of too much toleration rather than too little—that is, whether the civil-rights movement may have been brought close to the brink of destruction not by its critics but by those who, for the sake of the same kind of closing of ranks that you now demand on behalf of women, cravenly refused to exercise reasoned judgment.

To Eva Kashket: It is fascinating to me how readily you, and several others of my correspondents, heap epithets on the head of the young woman I was describing. If I had thought her a "spoiled brat," I should most likely have been able to dispose of her in a paragraph or two. Dispose of her is exactly what I was trying not, and what at this moment I would urge everyone else to try not, to do. The failure to see her as someone in a predicament, and thus the condescension, is then not mine but yours. Nor, I believe, would she—whatever her self-pity—condescend to herself so far as to make the outrageous claim that she had been "trained from the cradle to fail at anything but motherhood and housewifery"! Come, now. The year is 1971, the country is the United States of America—I'm afraid that failure, if failure there be, will need a somewhat stiffer and more honorable defense than that.

To Ann J. Lane: Any writer who attempts to argue the issue of his or her tone is a fool. There is no answer to misreading but the invitation to read again. As for your citation of Jane Addams, I am grateful for this added and so distinguished confirmation of the point I was trying to make about the education of the young woman in question.

To Rabbi Stephen Forstein: Nowhere did I "justify abandoning the attempt to rectify the inequalities which apply to woman as a class." Nowhere did I in fact deal with this question, since my subject was not what is wrong in the lives of women but what does a particular group of women *mean* by what they assert is wrong with their lives. To claim that I did is to indulge in a kind of sophisticated presumption. I would only add that women, Rabbi Forstein, are not in any but an unconsciously bigoted sense of the term a "class." They constitute at least half of the membership of every class there is.

To Linda C. Hunt: From my marvelous overprivileged perch in New York, which seems unaccountably to have protected me from the seething confrontation with life vouchsafed in Cambridge, Mass., I must confess never to have seen at first hand a true "revolution of rising expectations." I have read about them, though, in the New York *Times*, and was under the impression that they had to do with ill-fed, ill-clothed, and ill-housed populations who, enjoying the first scant liberation from endless scratching of the soil that technology provides, begin to imagine the possibility of such things as a bit of political power. Usually, if I have read the *Times* right, they fall prey to demagogues who manipulate their imaginings and take all the political power for themselves. I have also read somewhere about the random lusts of women; they have to do with what I think is called the "sexual revolution." I suggest a careful reading of Women's Liberation literature on the subject of *that* "revolution," for it turns out to be, in the view of the literature, nothing other than a male conspiracy to enslave women.

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Tut, tut, Miss Gornick. She who screams of "painfully threatened reaction" ought to bethink herself about the use of such imagery as that of Jewish mothers with fat breasts and fat faces in the place of argument. In whose editorial rooms is *your* just and profound prose written?

To Stuart Opotowsky I would say: Give it up, Mr. Opotowsky. It will get you nothing but a sinkful of dirty dishes.

And finally, for the kind words of Anne Bernays Kaplan, Ernest van den Haag, Irene Taviss, Manya Starr, Esther S. Yntema, and Rebecca West, my thanks. To Miss West I would wish to add that since she—whose 1916 pieces on "The Elegant Woman" in the *New Republic* were surely the most illuminating critique of that earlier women's movement called Feminism—feels I have not done justice to some of the genuine resentments of contemporary women, I can only hope that she herself will once more be impelled to write about this subject.

Clarifications

To the Editor of Commentary:

In the December 1970 Commentary there appears a letter I wrote in response to a piece by Dorothy Rabinowitz in the September 1970 Commentary. It appears that in editing this letter certain words have been added that were not part of the letter I wrote. This occurs in two places and in one significantly distorts my meaning. I refer to the sentence: "In the face of such calculated callousness *as Miss Rabinowitz displays* I suppose it must seem a bit strange that some clergy retain a capacity for gaiety." The words I have italicized here are not my own. Certainly the sentence as written by me was not meant to imply that the attitudes of Miss Rabinowitz might be expected to have influenced the emotional states of protesting American clergy (if only because those attitudes must have been completely unknown to them until recently). I was referring rather to the attitudes of "certain government spokesmen," attitudes which reflect official government policy.

I do not know how this unfortunate change occurred. It is possible that it was the result of someone's effort to tie together two parts of my letter that were not originally separated. The long portion in parentheses which immediately precedes the quoted sentence was a footnote in the letter I sent and not meant to be part of the main body of the letter. By inserting this "aside" at that point, the flow of my argument is interrupted and my meaning lost not only to the casual reader, but evidently also the person responsible for these changes.

Beverly Woodward
Cambridge, Massachusetts

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . In the September 1970 issue of Commentary I found Tom Milstein's "A Perspective on the Panthers" the most penetrating, the most brilliant essay I have read in many years.

In the November issue, on the other hand, it was disconcerting to find Norman Podhoretz remark, in answering Alfred Kazin: "I am at a loss to understand."

And in the same issue, Shlomo Avineri, answering critics, remarked: "I am at a loss to understand."

Adding up these and other confessed losses to understand in Commentary, the aggregate looms as formidable indeed.

In half a century as a reporter and news writer I found that we fellows were required to understand everything. The less we know about a thing, the more invincibly we understood it.

Far be it from me to recommend newspaper training to the literati. But clarity is, in truth, a wholesome affair.

Charles Roland
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

Letters from Readers increase in number, in length, and in acrimony. Group in-fighting becomes always more strident, truculent, and bad-mannered, reflecting and encouraging these all-too-prevalent aspects of the current social scene. Scholarly discussion descends to the cockpit in a shrill display of vituperation. . . .

I keep framed on my desk an observation of the late Edwin G. Boring, psychologist, scholar, urbane wit: "Tact, objectivity, good taste, and generosity. One is then in the home of the intellect."

I suggest that editors of Commentary and letter writers follow his prescription.

Grace Rubin-Rabson
Los Angeles, California

To the Editor of Commentary:

In the November 1970 issue, in a letter to the editor, Mr. Joseph Neyer of Rutgers University writes: "Let us not forget the sixteen-year-old black girl who wrote in her introduction to the black exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum that, with regard to the attitude toward the Jew, the blacks would find themselves at last 'with the majority.'"

It should be noted, as has already been noted in the New York *Times* of February 1, 1969, that the introduction by Candice Van Ellison was *not* to the exhibition at the Museum but to the book, *Harlem on My Mind*, published by Random House. The passage referred to by Mr. Neyer was actually a quotation from *Beyond the Melting Pot* by Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan. In the original manuscript submitted by Miss Van Ellison the passage is enclosed within quotation marks and a complete footnote cites the original source by Glazer and Moynihan. The editor of the book, who was not connected in any way with the Museum, saw fit to omit the quotation marks and the footnote, and those omissions led to the unfortunate misunderstandings that followed.

I hope this clarifies this matter for your readers.

Arthur Rosenblatt
Administrator for
Architecture and Planning
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
New York City

[*We are not at a loss to understand how the "unfortunate change" to which Miss Woodward refers occurred: it occurred precisely as she suggests. We apologize for the error. As to the late Dr. Boring's prescription, admirable though it be in many respects, we fear that following it might make of the Letters section an all too fitting memorial to his name.*—Ed.]

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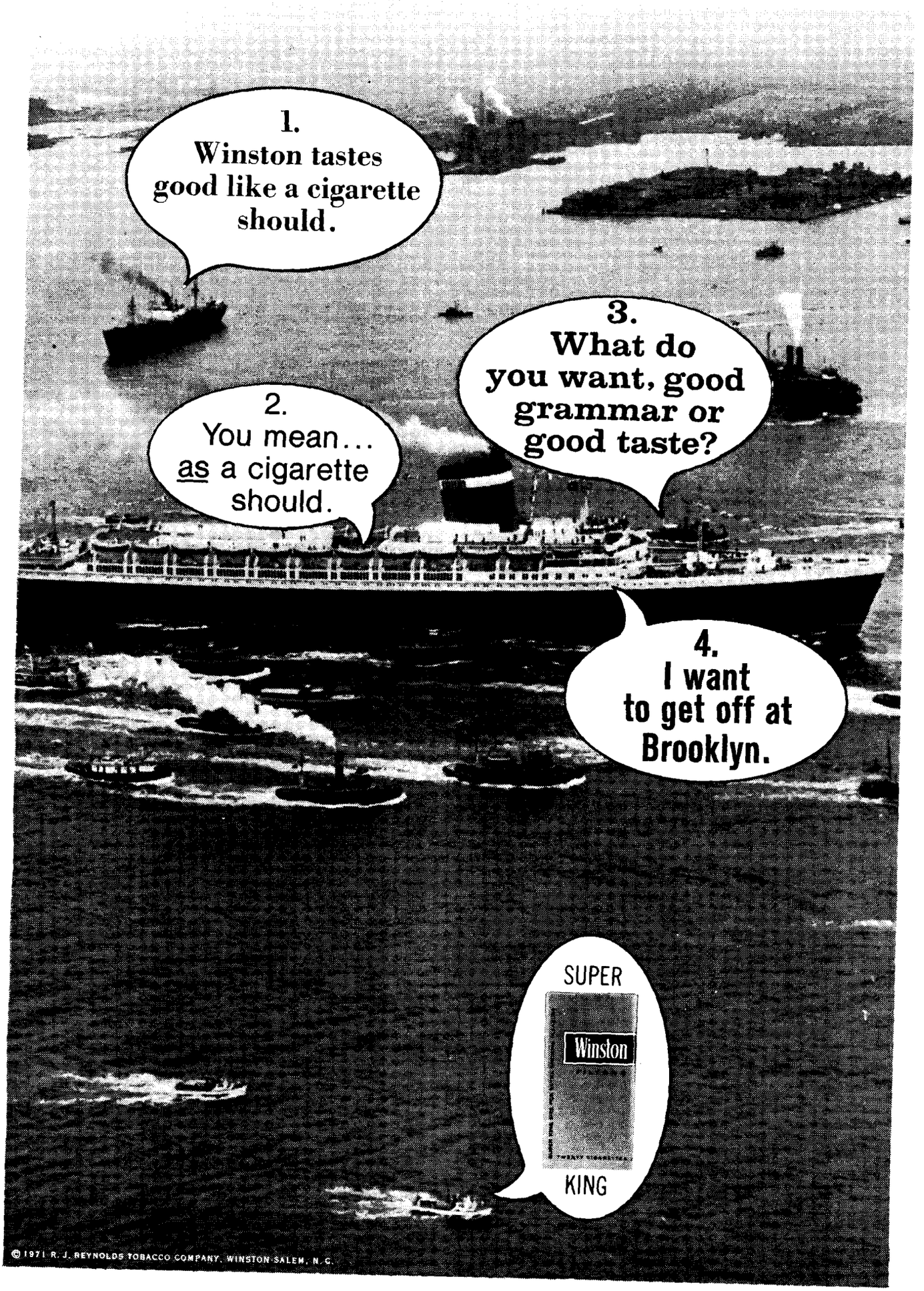

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Revolutionism & the Jews: 1

New York and Jerusalem

Walter Laqueur

CONCERNING THE participation of Jews, or lapsed Jews, in left-wing politics during the last century, two basic facts stand out: the prominent role they have played at one time or another, and their subsequent disappearance from positions of influence and command. In 19th-century Germany, Jews provided the ideological leadership of the socialist movement (Marx, Lassalle, Moses Hess). Later on, Jews were among the leaders of revolutionary, "centrist," and "revisionist" parties alike. The leadership of Austrian socialism ("Austro-Marxism") and Hungarian Communism was almost entirely Jewish, and before World War I there was not a single non-Jew in some East European delegations to the Congress of the Second International. If Jews gradually faded from the top echelons of these movements, it was not just Stalinism or Nazism that was responsible. To cite but one example: most of the founding members of the German Communist party in 1918, including the most prominent among them, were of Jewish origin. Only thirteen years later there was not a single Jew among the hundreds of Communists chosen by the party to run for election to the Reichstag. The prominence of Jews in today's New Left, after they deserted or were squeezed out of the Old Left, is therefore a phenomenon open to more than one interpretation.

The decisive impact which the French Revolution had on the political sentiments of Jews is so obvious as to need no elaboration here. Typical of a whole generation of young Jews was the case of Ludwig Börne. This *"Juif de Francfort,"* as his passport described him, was the greatest publicist of his age. He left behind a graphic description of the pre-revolutionary condition of the Jews in his home town:

> They enjoyed the loving care of the authorities. They were forbidden to leave their street on Sundays lest they be beaten up by drunks. They were not permitted to marry before the age of twenty-five, so that their children would be strong and healthy. On holidays they could not leave their homes before six in the evening lest the great heat cause them harm. The public gardens and promenades outside the city were closed to them; they had to walk in the fields—presumably to awaken their enthusiasm for agriculture. If a Jew crossed the street and a Christian citizen shouted, "Pay your respects, *Jud*'!" the Jew had to remove his hat; of such measures the intention no doubt was to strengthen the feelings of love and respect between Christians and Jews.

Once the walls of the ghetto came down, some young Jewish intellectuals hastened to dissociate themselves entirely from the pariah people. Others joined the democratic republican forces which had promised to lead the Jews out of degradation. Börne, who migrated to Paris, was attacked by his critics for his anti-Germanism. He replied that he loved Germany more than France, because Germany was the unhappier country, but how could he not admire France, the citadel of liberty?

The economic position of Jews in Central and Western Europe improved rapidly during the first half of the 19th century, but their social and political standing lagged far behind. It was therefore only natural that many Jewish intellectuals should have been in the forefront of republicanism and the radical Left. For although Jewish economic interests might have dictated a certain hostility to socialism, the radical Left stood for a world in which all men would be free and equal. Despite its occasional manifestations of anti-Semitism, the Left offered the Jews an opportunity to be politically active, whereas the parties favoring the established order by and large excluded Jews altogether from their ranks.

It was at this time that the image of the "typical Jewish intellectual" emerged. When such a person discarded his old religious beliefs, wrote Hermann Oncken, Lassalle's biographer, he turned to the other extreme, to atheism and materialism. Having done away with his own past, he felt no particular respect for Christian traditions either; indeed, he was resentful toward the whole world. For centuries the Jews had been held in contempt, yet they had continued to regard themselves as the chosen people. The emancipation provided, for the first time, a means of releasing this tension.

WALTER LAQUEUR is director of the Institute of Contemporary History in London. His books include *The Soviet Union and The Middle East* and *Russia and Germany: A Century of Conflict*. Mr. Laqueur's much-discussed article, "Reflections on Youth Movements," appeared in our June 1969 number.

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Georg Brandes (born Georg Morris Cohen), an earlier biographer of Lassalle, was the first to point to one of the more pronounced characteristics of the Jewish intellectual in radical politics: *chutzpah*, a term he defined as "presence of mind, impertinence, audacity, intrepidity, insolence." The Jews had been a timid people, forced into subservience; once they felt the impact of emancipation and *Kultur*, some of them were bound to gravitate toward extremism in politics.

It is usually forgotten, to be sure, that only a small minority of Jews permanently aligned themselves with the party of revolution. The vast majority of European Jewry west of Russia flirted with radical politics only for relatively brief periods in the wake of a widespread revolutionary wave, such as before and during 1848, and on certain occasions later on. Where there was no strong liberal party, or where there was a threat of right-wing anti-Semitism, they gave their vote to the Social Democrats. But a large sector of European Jewry was middle class in character and supported middle-of-the-road liberal and democratic parties—a bit Left of center, but not much. These Jews were patriotic and, to a large extent, conformist; they joined a revolutionary movement only in the face of a government that opposed assimilation and integration. The history of the Jews in the radical movement is therefore largely the history of certain sections of the Jewish intelligentsia, both before and after emancipation.

VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS have been offered to explain the particular fascination exerted by the party of revolution on the Jewish intelligentsia. Of these, the anti-Semitic thesis known as the "ferment of decomposition" has been advanced in different forms in many countries. Briefly, it runs as follows: unable to establish a state of their own, reduced to a marginal, parasitic existence among the peoples of the earth, Jews developed over the centuries an overwhelming destructive urge. Having no fatherland, they wished to deny one to everybody else as well. More extravagant anti-Semites saw a worldwide Jewish conspiracy to subvert the Aryan peoples and to establish Jewish world rule. The more moderate regarded the trend toward radicalism as the unfortunate heritage of an unhappy people, understandable in the light of its past, but dangerous for law and order and the preservation of the traditions and values of non-Jews.

Among Jews, and within the radical parties themselves, the subject was not often discussed. Marx, Lassalle, and many other Jewish socialists completely dissociated themselves from Judaism and Jewry, for both of which they had nothing but contempt. Their choice of revolutionary socialism implied an absolute break with tradition. But it may be wondered if their decision in favor of the radical Left was entirely unconnected with their Jewish origin and heritage. Anti-Semites like Bakunin were not the only ones to think it was not unconnected. A Jewish contemporary of Marx wrote that radical politics was but a new and different manifestation of religion ("one goes to the democratic club, as the religious believer goes to his house of worship"). Deprived of its transcendental character, religion had become politics, with freedom and happiness on earth the secular message of the new messianism. Gustav Mayer, the distinguished historian of German socialism, found the prophets of Israel to be the models of Marx's faith. He compared Marx's analysis of early industrial capitalism, with its ravages and inequities, with Isaiah's denunciations of King Ahab. Léon Blum, writing at the turn of the century, pursued this theme further. Jews, he predicted, would play a central role in the destruction of the old order and the building of the new. Insofar as there was a collective Jewish will, it tended toward revolution. According to Blum, the highly developed critical faculties of Jews were bound to turn against any idea, any tradition, which could not be justified by reason and did not conform with the facts. Where Christ preached love, the Jewish God stood for justice. The combination of reason and justice, in pursuit of a transformation of the social order, spelled socialism.

Not many Marxists held these views; most preferred to believe with Kautsky that to the extent that Jews were affected by messianic aspirations, these led in a reactionary—i.e., Zionist—direction. The attraction of Jews to socialism was to be explained rather by the simple fact that most of them were city dwellers, and as such had the specific qualities required for the progress of humanity. Though small in numbers, the Jews of Western Europe had produced Spinoza and Heine, Lassalle, Marx, and other geniuses. But these spiritual giants became effective forces in the world only after they had broken out of the fetters of Judaism. Their main struggles were carried on outside its sphere, and usually in conscious opposition to it: "The Jews have become an eminently revolutionary force, while Judaism has become a reactionary factor." Similar views have been expressed frequently on the Left, most recently in an essay, "The Non-Jewish Jew," written by the late Isaac Deutscher; while the essay does not mention Kautsky by name, it is essentially a paraphrase of his pre-1914 thesis concerning Jews and radicalism.

Jewish revolutionaries striving for the liberation of mankind obviously had no use for Jewish nationalism. Most regarded it as an atavistic throwback, a reassertion of tribalism over universalism, a retreat from internationalist ideals. It is only fair to add that this view of things was by no means limited to the Left; it was part

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and parcel of the "bourgeois-assimilationist" heritage of the 19th century. The liberal argument against Zionism—voiced, among others, by European and American Reform rabbis—held that divine providence had scattered the Jews all over the world so that they might appear as witnesses to the idea of a God of justice and promote the realization of the prophetic ideal. Jewish revolutionaries accepted this argument as Marx adapted Hegel: they stood it on its head. However, of all the arguments against Zionism (of which there are no doubt a great many) this has been the weakest. Some of the advocates of universalism believed, no doubt sincerely, in what it involved, but for many others it was simply a convenient pretext: "messianic mission" really stood for the fleshpots of Europe and America. A few revolutionaries may have genuinely thought that in view of their vulnerability and rootlessness the Jews were (as Deutscher put it) the natural protagonists of cosmopolitanism and internationalism. But most simply preferred the wider stage of European politics to the narrow confines of the Jewish community.

SEVERAL GENERATIONS after Börne and Marx, yet another explanation was advanced for the Jewish propensity toward left-wing radicalism: that it is an outgrowth of Jewish messianism. This argument has been assailed on the grounds that those who embraced Communism were not, after all, Orthodox Jews, and their move to radicalism was anyway based in part on a wish to dissociate themselves from Judaism altogether. This, however, is not altogether convincing, since there is no reason why the immanent urge for social justice, which for thousands of years found expression in the Jewish religion, could not manifest itself, in a post-religious age, in a secular movement. But the basic assumption, namely that the Jewish religion is somehow more "leftist" in character than others, and that Jews are therefore predestined to join revolutionary parties, does not withstand investigation. The Jewish religion, first of all, is essentially conservative—or at least can be seen to give as much warrant to political conservatism as to any other political tendency. Secondly, the messianic impulse toward eternal peace and social justice has been as clearly evident in other religions. Thirdly, Judaism places strict emphasis on allegiance to a religious-national entity—hardly a prerequisite for cosmopolitanism. It may be only natural for a group that was the victim of persecution for so long to support or sympathize with other oppressed minorities. But this is clearly an insufficient explanation for attitudes that negate the very values of the societies which liberated the Jews in the first place.

One element of revolutionary politics that may have exercised a powerful attraction on Jews is its idealism; another is its abstract character. It is indisputable that whereas Jews have excelled in many fields of human endeavor, their contribution to politics has not on the whole been outstanding. Traditionally they have shown great ability on the level of abstract thought, but politics also involves instinct, common sense, wisdom, and foresight, and in this respect the record of Jewish intellectuals has not been that impressive. Nor have they demonstrated much understanding of the more imponderable factors in national life. This of course has been one of the main failings of the radical Left in general: not one of the ideologists of revolutionary socialism, for instance, foresaw that in our time internationalism would give way everywhere to national socialism—a trend which has had unfortunate consequences for Jewish socialists, for Jewish communities, and for the world in general.

Historically, these Jewish weaknesses are not difficult to explain. It would have been a near-miracle if, after two thousand years of statelessness, Jews had shown political instinct or the responsibility and maturity that comes from centuries-old traditions of statecraft. Individual Jews, to be sure, have devised clever ideological constructions, but invariably these constructions have exhibited every quality but the essential one: they were hopelessly wrong. Those who are appalled by some of the inanities of present-day radical theories about Judaism or Israel would do well to reread the works of some writers of the 1930's. I refer among other works to Otto Heller's *Downfall of Judaism* (1930), in which the author demonstrated in great detail that in Eastern Europe, under Communism, the Jewish question had been solved once and for all, and that anti-Semitism had lost its social foundation. "What is Jerusalem to the Jewish proletariat?" Heller asked. "Next year in Jerusalem! Next year in the Crimea! Next year in Birobidzhan!"

William Zukerman's *The Jew in Revolt* (1937), an ambitious analysis of the Jewish situation, makes even stranger reading today. Zukerman attacked in the sharpest terms the various schemes then current for promoting Jewish emigration from Nazi Germany. German Jews, he proclaimed, were deeply rooted in German soil and bound to their country by a thousand spiritual ties: "It is a gross slander on the German Jews, whose love for their fatherland is proverbial, to represent them as being ready to rush away in panic at the first approach of misfortune. . . . After all, the Jews are not the only victims of persecution in Germany today. Why not a wholesale exodus of German Communists, socialists, pacifists, liberals, and Catholics?" Zukerman placed the responsibility for the despicable idea of Jewish emigration from Germany squarely on the fanatical Zionist bourgeoisie: "The fact is that insofar as the exodus plan has now become a popular solution for the Jewish problem, it is due more to a number of Zionist zealots and to a

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few big Jewish financiers than to the fascists. Of all the paradoxes of our time, this one will probably go down into history as the most curious of all." But he had no doubt that the Zionist project would fail: "In spite of the brutal Nazi persecution, the bulk of German Jewry will remain in Germany and they will be there long after Hitler is gone. . . . They bear the cross of their suffering with dignity and fortitude as behooves an ancient people that has seen martyrdom and knows that tyranny, no matter how temporarily powerful, cannot forever turn back the wheels of history."

Zukerman's thesis, incredible to read today, was nevertheless based on a careful ideological analysis. The Soviet Union, he wrote, had solved the Jewish question "economically, politically, and psychologically," an end had been put to the scourge of Jew-hatred, and "the very meaning of the word anti-Semitism is rapidly being forgotten." This shining example signaled the end of the age of liberalism. The Jew, whether or not he approved of everything going on in the Soviet Union, could "do nothing but follow the road shown by the Soviet Union for the solution of the Jewish problem." The Jew was the "faithful, old, brass-buttoned lackey kicked by fascism down the steps of the palace of capitalism which he did so much to erect and over which he watched devotedly for so many years." But, Zukerman concluded with Fanonian pathos, adherence to the revolutionary socialist movement would atone for everything; by revolting against the existing order the Jews were revolting also against themselves—"and there is no greater, and morally more cleansing, revolt than this."

ZUKERMAN WAS NOT, I believe, a member of the Communist party. His views, far from being aberrant, were shared, if in somewhat more moderate form, by many well-meaning and apparently sane people. The fact that this was so raises a disturbing question regarding their very instinct for survival. The issue of survival is not one that is likely to perturb today's Jewish radical, bemused as he is by a world revolution to whose interests the concerns of individual nations have to be subordinated. Seen from this vantage point, Jews are expendable; other nations, after all, have come and gone in history. Trotsky relates in his autobiography that from his earliest childhood nationalist passions and prejudices were incomprehensible and loathsome to him. Rosa Luxemburg wrote to Mathilde Wurm in 1917: "Why do you come with your special Jewish sorrows? I feel just as sorry for the wretched Indian victim in Putamayo, the Negroes in Africa. . . . I cannot find a special corner in my heart for the ghetto." This, in a way, was an understatement, for, to judge from her writings and speeches, Rosa Luxemburg actually cared less for Jewish victims of persecution than for victims of colonial oppression. But in any event it is difficult to imagine that Lenin, though an internationalist second to none, would have referred with such disdain to "special Russian sorrows."

Which brings us to Jewish self-hatred, a well-known phenomenon long before Theodor Lessing published his study of the subject in the 1920's. (To be sure, self-hatred is hardly limited to Jews, and even among Jews it is by no means limited to radicals.) The key to the specific Jewish propensity toward guilt feelings ("it is our fault that we are hated") has been found by some observers to lie in religious tradition, but since the Jewish religion puts no more emphasis on individual and collective guilt than does Christianity, this explanation remains unconvincing. Modern liberalism, on the other hand, is a guilt-culture *par excellence*. Nevertheless, whatever its source, the importance of self-hatred for Jewish radicals today should not be exaggerated. It plays a smaller role now than two generations ago in Europe, and historical parallels are likely to be misleading.

The young Jewish radical who supports, at least in theory, Al Fatah against Israel ("a steady patriot of the world alone, the friend of every country but his own") is not as a rule motivated by self-hatred. Jewishness is for him largely a meaningless proposition; he does not regard himself as part of the community into which he was accidentally born. Hence he is also not a traitor, since one cannot betray what one does not believe in or what one feels no allegiance to. There is admittedly a special cutting edge to the rejection of Judaism and Zionism by the young Jewish radical of our time.* The Old Left did not feel any special solidarity with the Jewish people either, but having lived through the greatest catastrophe in Jewish history it sensed after 1945 the inappropriateness of a public dissocia-

* This point has been made by J. L. Talmon in his recently published book, *Israel among the Nations:* "The descendants of countless generations of injustice, and the heirs to a most ancient tradition of revolt against it, they feel uncomfortable, while there is so much evil and falsehood around; 'a little more so' than their Gentile comrades, because of the great intensity peculiar to their race, and the unquenchable spirit of nonconformism and restless quest which partly at least stems from the lack of a firm Jewish commitment and an anchorage in a vital collective experience. The latter makes the Jewish rebels turn with obvious self-hatred against their own race. Having absorbed the criteria of the detractors of Judaism and never having quite come to terms with their Jewishness—in a positive or negative way—they are unable to take Judaism as it is for granted. They are defying it with standards which can never be met, and attack Israel with ferocious glee for its 'crimes.' Ultra-internationalists, they become racists where Jews are concerned." The phenomenon is not new, but whereas the reaction in the past has usually been in the rationalist tradition, more recently the anarchist-destructive trend has been more pronounced. This "un-Jewish" shift toward irrationalism is an interesting innovation.

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tion from the Jewish community. For the young Jewish radical, on the other hand, Jewish history begins in 1960 or thereabouts, and no such inhibitions apply. In some cases one can clearly discern a simple desire to shock—"the death camps were set up and run by Zionists in cooperation with the Gestapo," or "the destruction of Israel would benefit mankind." But existing studies have shown that most young radicals grew up in left-wing homes, without any strong ties to the Jewish community, and hence did not have to rebel against tradition in order to reach their present position with regard to Jews. We can now see that the general process of disintegration that has affected Diaspora Jewry over the last century and more was merely retarded momentarily, but certainly not halted, by Hitler and the Holocaust.

II

UNTIL FAIRLY RECENTLY, most Israelis have been unaware of internal developments in the United States and especially among American Jews. Only during the last year or so have terms like SDS, Yippies, Weathermen, become known outside a small circle of *cognoscenti*. Members of the Israeli political Establishment visiting the United States usually confined themselves to Washington, where they heard nothing particularly disquieting. They would probably not have believed the truth anyway, for to the generation of Israelis who grew up on Berl Katznelson and shared his contempt for Jews willing to fight the social and national struggle of every people but their own, The Movement of the 1960's would have appeared totally incomprehensible.

Some of the younger Israelis, however, have been more receptive. Like most small countries, Israel faces the danger of cultural provincialism; there is, especially among the young, a fear of being cut off from the main centers of world culture, and a desire to be up on every single intellectual fad and fashion. Within the limits set by climate and good sense, young Israelis are, not surprisingly, prepared to follow the sartorial fashions of America and Western Europe; they have adopted the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and other exponents and features of the youth subculture. Drugs have made certain inroads, as have movies expressing the new spiritual climate, and students have demanded a greater say in running the universities.

But for the more extreme cultural and political antics of American-Jewish radicalism, Israel does not provide promising soil. There is a small New Left (*Smol Israeli Hadash*—"Siah"), and a tiny but vociferous quasi-Trotskyite movement ("Matzpen").* Many of its members have by now migrated to Europe and the United States —not because they face the gallows or the firing squad, but for sound ideological reasons. The position of a member of "Matzpen" is not unlike that of a Jewish Communist in Mandatory Palestine in the 1920's or 30's: once he had reached the conclusion that Jewish Palestine was *ab initio* imperialist and anti-revolutionary, a "colonialist society" that could not be transformed but must be destroyed, the only logical, sensible, and honest conclusion was to emigrate. The chances for such a person to integrate himself within the Arab national movement, however close he felt to it politically, were minimal.

But on the whole these political and cultural influences do not go very deep and the impact of the marginal groups is limited. There is a world of difference between the mood of the American-Jewish radical intelligentsia and the state of mind of most Israeli intellectuals. It is one thing to engage in the systematic disparagement of "Amerika," to predict its further decline and eventual downfall, or at the very least to demand a radical reorientation in the scale of national priorities. To hold this view, even to act upon it, does not expose one to the risk of mortal danger, nor is one's paycheck likely to be affected. Israel, on the other hand, is a beleaguered fortress, its priorities dictated by its enemies. The advocacy of courses of action whose possible effect would be to weaken the state's defenses is not merely unpatriotic in an abstract sense, but can endanger the very existence of the state and the safety of its citizens.

Israeli patriotism, and the conspicuous lack of guilt feelings among Israeli intellectuals, may strike Americans as strange, if not somewhat offensive. Israelis are still strongly imbued with the pioneering values of the *halutzim*, values that must seem as outdated and "square" as the tradition of the frontier in American history. For the Israeli, on the other hand, the American-Jewish radical represents the Diaspora Jew *par excellence:* immature, irresponsible, tormented with sundry imaginary problems, full of verbal revolutionism but no great believer in the unity of theory and practice. When he comes to Israel, the American radical may enthusiastically join a kibbutz, but then find it impossible to adjust to the discipline required of him. It comes as no great surprise to Israelis when American "revolutionaries" leave after a few months declaring that the kibbutz is not radical enough, and proclaiming their intention to return to America, where they will no doubt join the less demanding and more glamorous struggle for liberation as practiced there or—even more likely—become absorbed into the bourgeois society they scorn. To the young Israeli, his American contemporary—restless, neurotic, faddish—is basically unserious, and his ideological critique of Israel more than a little suspect.

* See Carl Gershman's article, "'Matzpen' and Its Sponsors," COMMENTARY, August 1970.

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ISRAELI SKEPTICISM toward American radicals applies above all to the criticism of Israel's "failure" to come to terms with her Arab neighbors. The bi-national solution that some American radicals have advanced may indeed be a wonderful concept, but where in the world has it ever worked? Israelis are told that their country should cease being a nationalist-racialist state and should become instead truly socialist and democratic; on this basis, it is argued, rapprochement with the Arabs will become possible. But even if the basic assumption were accepted, namely, that states get along better if they become more alike (a highly doubtful proposition), the opposite course of action would seem to be indicated. To become more like the revolutionary Arab countries Israel would have to introduce a military dictatorship with a one-party system in which civil liberties would no longer be respected and which ideologically would contain an admixture of Islamic, Communist, and fascist elements—a regime, in short, similar to that in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq. Perhaps on such a basis some common ground could indeed be found with the Arab states. I myself doubt it, but in any case, who would want to live in such a state? What good does it do to argue, as Noam Chomsky does, that a solution to the conflict can be found once nationalism is overcome, if even the extreme Left wing of the "Arab liberation movement" is intensely nationalist in character and continues to deny the very existence of a Jewish nation in Israel?

Israelis will note the genuine concern behind the advice offered them, but they will as a rule reject it out of hand, not just because they consider it totally removed from reality, but mainly because their "advisers" clearly have no wish to link their own fate with that of the Jewish state. Some Israelis have by now reached the conclusion that they may be better off without a certain type of well-wisher who, affected by the "American disease," has only negative criticism to offer and who is, moreover, temperamentally ill-suited to a daily life which in most respects is still much harsher than life in the United States.

The estrangement between Israel and certain sections of American Jewry is not a problem to be dismissed lightly. Since the end of World War II, Zionism and the State of Israel have become more dependent than ever on American Jews. While American Jewry has given invaluable political and financial help to Zionism and Israel, only a few American Jews have in fact settled in Israel, much to the disappointment of Israeli leaders. Yet how realistic was the expectation that sizable numbers of American Jews would migrate? Zionists have always entertained a naive belief in the ultimate rejection of the Diaspora; Israeli schoolchildren are taught to this day that life in the Diaspora is both physically unsafe and intolerable for proud, self-respecting Jews, and that sooner or later the "ingathering of the exiles" will take place. On a higher level of sophistication, it is argued in Israel that the "American crisis" (the rise in black anti-Semitism, the breakdown of liberal pluralism, and other social processes) will make assimilation more difficult, if not impossible; that there will follow a new revival of national consciousness among American Jews that will affect hundreds of thousands, if not millions, and lead them toward mass emigration. At the same time, the hope has been expressed that even the New-Left Jew will sooner or later confront the question of his identity and will realize that Israel is the only place where he can live as a human being, free of the pressures and distortions of life in the Diaspora.

It is not easy to understand on what these hopes are based. There is a Jewish problem in America, and it will probably be aggravated in the years to come, partly as the result of the general difficulties faced by American society, partly because of the New Left and other social and political trends. But it may be useful to recall that well before Hitler the Jewish problem in Central Europe was much more acute, yet no mass emigration resulted. Zionist thought has never quite accepted the fact that—a few idealists apart—people leave their native lands only because of extreme economic or political pressure, of the kind that is unlikely to arise in America.*

* Even Chaim Arlosoroff was no exception. In a long, fascinating essay ("New York and Jerusalem") published in 1929 he developed the theory that American Jewry, not being rooted in primary production, but over-represented in various marginal professions, was bound to be hit severely by a crisis and by the trend toward concentration and bureaucratization in the American economy (such as the squeezing out of small shopkeepers by the big department stores). Having been told in Cleveland that among 100,000 Polish Americans there were only 30 lawyers as compared with 1,900 among the same number of Jews, he wrote: "When I heard this I said that if a young Jewish lawyer in Vienna named Herzl had not already published the *Judenstaat*, it would have been written thirty years later by one of his colleagues in Cleveland." Arlosoroff noted that at the time very few Jews held a prominent place in American cultural life, in the press and literature, but he also pointed to the growing number of young Jews streaming into these professions; sooner or later, he predicted, there would be an outcry about the "complete Judaization" of the press and literature of the country. Arlosoroff erred in attributing paramount importance to the lopsided Jewish social structure; he failed to see that in the country as a whole the numbers employed in agriculture and mining were in fact declining, whereas science and technology —no less productive branches of the national economy which were to provide work for many Jews—were expanding rapidly. Arlosoroff was no Marxist, but in his analysis of the prospects of American Jewry he attributed great significance to economic factors, which he thought would make the Zionist solution inevitable. Events in Germany a few years later showed that anti-Semitism in its most rampant form came to the fore not as the consequence of economic and social competition but as the result of political developments which had their own momentum.

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Even if Jews should be squeezed out of certain professions, there will be openings elsewhere; even if their political influence should decrease, they will not be defenseless—unless a catastrophe should occur that would jeopardize not only American Jews but the prosperity and security of the entire nation.

III

THERE HAS BEEN in Israel much talk of late about the necessity of a "dialogue" with the New Left. Nothing should be done to dampen the enthusiasm of those eager to try their luck, but no one familiar with the problem can feel sanguine about the outcome. Anyone who takes the position that Mao, Fanon, and Guevara are the leading thinkers of the century, that LeRoi Jones is a paragon of socialist humanism, or that the American political system is worse than Nazism, is bound to denounce Israel as a puppet of American imperialism. The thought of The Movement has a certain logic and consistency; once one accepts the basic premises, one cannot stop short where Israel is concerned.

Israelis have heard of groups like "Jews for Urban Justice" and *Na'aseh*, of *Havurat Shalom*, ACIID, and the "Free Jewish Universities," of the *Bet Midrash* at the University of Michigan and the *Jewish Radical* at Berkeley. While opposed to the Jewish Establishment, these groups profess a deep commitment to their own Jewishness; some of them claim that they "identify strongly with Israel although not necessarily with her policies." Their doctrines betray strange and contradictory ideological influences. Some spokesmen, like Arthur Waskow of Washington, advocate a return to the ideas of the Bund (minus Yiddish and other essential planks of that organization), while others claim to have rediscovered Ber Borokhov. (Some sixty years ago Borokhov attempted to formulate a Marxist-Zionist synthesis; he believed that Palestine would be built as the result of "stychic" forces—i.e., objective economic trends which would drive both Jewish capital and the Jewish proletariat toward a Zionist solution.) The Bund played an important role in educating the Jewish masses of Eastern Europe, and Borokhov was a man of considerable intellect and erudition, though not the greatest of political prophets. (He predicted, for example, that the Palestinian Arabs would be absorbed by the Jews as the result of a process of cultural assimilation.) But whatever the past merits of the Bund and Borokhov—and many of their views were mistaken even sixty years ago—their present relevance to American Jewry is roughly comparable to that of the dispute over the use of amulets between Rabbis Emden and Eibeschütz in the 18th century.

Israelis are as distrustful of the professed "commitment" of the Jewish radicals to Israel as these radicals are of the generation of their parents, and on very similar grounds: the perceived discrepancy between their words and their actions. The radicals accuse the Jewish Establishment of hypocrisy, but what does a "strong identification with Israel" mean unless it involves settling in Israel? To get ten semester hours of credit for living six months on a kibbutz is not quite what was understood by the *halutzim* as "self-realization." Admirers of Lenin, the committed radicals obviously do not subscribe to his notion of the unity of theory and practice, certainly not in respect to Israel; if they did, they might be led to question the appropriateness of criticizing Israeli policies from MIT or Berkeley. In addition, it is as difficult for these radicals to defend their position against the anti-Israeli New Left as it was for Borokhov's followers to defend themselves against the Russian Marxists, and not just because the Bolsheviks were the stronger party. Properly speaking, their commitment to a "critical radical political ideology" involves opposition to American foreign policy, not only in Vietnam, but opposition *tout court*. Some want to see America defeated in the global contest; others simply advocate a drastic reduction of defense spending for a decade or two until the main domestic problems are solved. But at this point commitment to the basic tenets of the New Left clashes with the interests of the survival of Israel, and no ideological legerdemain can dispose of the resulting impasse.

Given the constant geopolitical factors, and Soviet ambitions in the Middle East, the survival of Israel, as of other small nations, depends on a global balance between the two super-powers. If this balance is radically upset, if America is seriously weakened, the Soviet Union will emerge as the predominant power in the Middle East. Such a development has, to put it cautiously, grave consequences for the independence and the very survival of the State of Israel. This is the basic fact of Middle East politics, and there is no getting around it. Any action which upsets the balance of power is bound to strengthen the Soviet Union, and jeopardize the existence of Israel. The anti-Israel faction of the New Left is thus absolutely correct in its criticism of the pro-Israel radicals: once one accepts the basic assumption that the American Establishment is totally evil, that its foreign policy is simply a function of its imperialist, anti-revolutionary character, and that the defeat of America is in the interest of world revolution, one cannot logically make an exception of American policy in the Middle East (unless, of course, one maintains that there is no such thing as the balance of power—which is about as sensible as the attempt to deny the existence of atomic bombs).

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SOME ISRAELI students of American-Jewish radicalism have argued that every ideological belief has its Achilles heel and that "one well-placed blow may prove fatal to the whole structure, leaving the believer bereft of his former beliefs with their built-in screening mechanisms. . . . The Achilles heel of the Jew on the Left is the problem of his identity. . . . Only Zionism has created the reality which the left wing aspires to. Only Zionism has made it possible for a Jew to exist without the fact of his Jewishness."* Hence the need to persuade the New-Left Jew that Israel is the only place in the world where Jews can lead a fully human existence.

The argument is quite familiar. Seventy years ago Max Nordau wrote about young Jewish intellectuals who had become "cripples within and counterfeit persons without, ridiculous and hateful, like everything unreal, to all men of high standards, new Marranos who no longer have a faith to sustain them." But America is not Europe, and the New Leftist *has* a faith to sustain him. Perhaps he will eventually realize through bitter experience that he is not wanted in the struggle for the liberation of other peoples and that by pushing himself into positions of command and authority, he does more harm than good. Nordau, well before World War I, in a remarkable prophetic speech apostrophizing some of the left-wing critics of Zionism, predicted that socialism would bring them the same disappointment as had the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the movement for political freedom: "If we should live to see that socialist theory becomes practice, you'll be surprised to meet again in the new order that old acquaintance, anti-Semitism. And it won't help at all that Marx and Lassalle were Jews. . . . The founder of Christianity was a Jew, too, but to the best of my knowledge Christendom does not think it owes a debt of gratitude to the Jews. I do not doubt that the ideologists of socialism will always remain faithful to their doctrine, that they will never become racialists. But they will have to take realities into account. The anti-Semitism of the masses will dictate their policy." Appeals like Nordau's have only rarely impressed Jewish revolutionaries, who always pooh-poohed the idea that anti-Semitism was "eternal" (which, to be sure, Herzl and Nordau never claimed), or that it constituted a serious handicap in the struggle for social liberation.

The Zionist conception of the deep-seated vulnerability of the Jewish radical who devotes his life to the liberation struggle of other nations, but who will eventually return to his own fold, was exaggerated even in Nordau's day. It is, I fear, now very much out of date. Sixty years ago, a young East European Jewish intellectual could drift from Bolshevism or Menshevism to Bundism or Sejmism or Zionism (or vice versa) without great difficulty; he was only half a generation removed—if that—from Jewish tradition. The Jewish radical of the 1970's is no longer part of that tradition, and I doubt whether this situation can be changed.

Thus the hope that young radicals of this generation will again become "good Jews" is a slender one, comparable perhaps with the hope of a psychoanalyst for the recovery of a patient with a weak ego structure or a serious intellectual deficiency. Individuals may rediscover their Jewish identity and consciousness, but a catastrophe of the magnitude of Nazism would be needed to effect a mass reconversion of people so far removed from Judaism. Jewish radicalism in America is, of course, a form of assimilation, and as such is part of a much wider historical process. The assumption—shared by most (not all) Zionist thinkers—that complete assimilation is not possible has been proved correct in some countries, incorrect in others. Assimilation in the Western world, as I noted, was retarded by the Holocaust, which strengthened Jewish consciousness, created a favorable atmosphere for Zionism among Jews and non-Jews, and made the creation of the State of Israel possible. But the shock has passed; a new generation of Jews and non-Jews has grown up which no longer feels a special obligation or commitment. Even those radicals who express concern for Israel are increasingly preoccupied with American domestic policies.

It can therefore be predicted with reasonable certainty that specifically Jewish preoccupations will gradually be relegated to a lower order of importance in the scale of priorities of many Jewish radicals; they already figure lower than Indochina, pollution, women's liberation, and the race question, and will no doubt decline even further. This may be all to the good, for the present stance of the Jewish radical is a halfway house, morally and intellectually inconsistent, and thus untenable in the long run. "Committed Jews" who devote almost all their time and energies to acting as catalysts for what they regard as "progress" in a Gentile society will find that their Jewish commitment becomes more and more meaningless and irrelevant. Israel will be an embarrassment to them, and they will want to wash their hands of it. The interests of world revolution, after all, override those of a small country in the Middle East.

THE POLITICAL and social position of American Jewry has for a variety of historial reasons been a good deal less vulnerable than that of European Jewry, but the general crisis affecting America at the present time has dangerous implications for its Jewish citizens. This would

* Zvi Lamm, "The New Left and Jewish Identity," *Dispersion and Unity*, 10, 1970, pp. 64-5.

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be the case even if Messrs. Rubin, Hoffman, Rudd, the Jewish Weathermen and their supporters had never appeared on the scene. The fact that Jews have been prominently associated with declarations and actions abhorred by the majority of Americans provides fuel for a reaction which will be not just anti-Left or anti-intellectual, but potentially anti-Semitic as well. No great demagogic skill would be needed to single out the Jews as the main culprits for the evils which have befallen America in recent times. If this should happen, the New Left may enter history, ironically enough, as a movement which, albeit in an indirect way, delayed the full integration of American Jewry, kindled the dimly shining candle of Jewish consciousness, and (for all one knows) promoted a substantial increase in *aliyah* to Israel. This would be an example of what Hegel called the cunning of reason. Whether these incidental benefits would be worth the price that would have to be paid is another question.

Of course, it may be argued that despite everything I have said, the outlook for relations between Israel and American Jewry as a whole is brighter than might appear. Perhaps I have stressed too much certain contradictions in Jewish life which prevail all over the globe and which time may assuage if not solve. I have after all been concerned in this analysis with the activities of a relatively small, if highly vocal, sector of American Jews. But while Jewish Maoists support Al Fatah and the PFLP, the number of American immigrants to Israel is increasing from year to year, and the great majority of American Jews support Israel wholeheartedly. All this is undoubtedly true, but it is also true that American Jews today are apprehensive, and justly so, both about Israel and about the security of their own position in American life. And Israelis have cause for apprehension as well, for their fate, as they well know, depends to a great extent on the future of American Jewry. The four decades since Arlosoroff wrote his essay have witnessed an immense advance of American Jews in almost every field; yet at the end of the period the problems besetting them, though different in character, are at least as formidable as ever, and the dangers looming ahead even greater.

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Revolutionism & the Jews: 2

Appropriating the Religious Tradition

Robert Alter

On Telegraph Avenue near the Berkeley-Oakland border, an easy walk from one of the cradles of hippie culture and still closer to the national headquarters of the Black Panther party, there is a billboard on which is written in six-foot-high letters this and nothing else: MAN, MYTH, AND MAGIC. This alliterative enigma is in fact the announcement of a new publication, but it could also serve as the motto for the "counter-culture" flamboyantly evident a mile away, and visible elsewhere across the country wherever the young and the dissident gather. The still growing infatuation with ritual, mysticism, and the occult is sometimes dissociated from political activity, in other cases—witness the attempted levitation of the Pentagon—curiously intertwined with political protest. Among Jews the new vogue of exotic traditions has had the peculiar effect of giving an unexpected cachet to Judaism—not, of course, the organizational Judaism of the "complacent" suburbanite in his million-dollar temple, but the unquiet faith of an inscrutable Kabbalah, of an ecstatic Hasidism, of the Prophets with their impulse of intransigent social criticism.

As with the Gentiles, so with the Jews—some manifestations of the cultic revival have been hyperconsciously religious (or psychotherapeutic) and basically apolitical, like Shlomo Carlebach's House of Love and Prayer in San Francisco, where Hasidism, folk music, and an Esalen touch of togetherness join hands in exaltation. Most of the advanced Jewish young, however, are politically conscious, and for many of them the Jewish idea seems to be playing an increasingly important role in their political consciousness. As recently as three or four years ago, it might have seemed absurd to be "hung up" on ancestral traditions when one should be preparing to put his body on the line for the sake of his oppressed brothers and sisters in the black ghettos and in Southeast Asia, but today the concern with tradition is increasingly seen as a point of departure for political activism. This development is in part an imitative response to the continuing stress on militant self-affirmation, or "liberation," among the dark-skinned ethnic minorities, but it is also encouraged by the discovery in the light of the new irrationalism that Judaism, as a vivid body of myth invested with the spiritual authority of three millennia, provides rich resources for dissent from the technological flatness and bureaucratic impersonality of a detested "Amerika."

Since my account of this phenomenon already verges on the simplifications of caricature, let me stress at the outset that there are enormous differences in outlook, sensibility, and even political aims among the varied groups that now identify themselves as Jewish radicals (with the adjective emphasized). Indeed, there are currents of Jewish radicalism quite as far apart, at least in mentality, as the American Council for Judaism is from the Jewish Defense League. I shall not attempt here either a comprehensive survey of the new Jewish radical groups or a general critique of their political views. What I would like to do is to consider a few of the representative ways in which Jewish historical experience is being made a rationale for political involvement, in order to try to distinguish which of these ways may be viable, which problematic or dubious, and finally which may seriously violate the central values of Jewish tradition.

For some of the new radicals, the Jewish past is above all a source of vocabulary, and it is a vocabulary that has peculiar effects on the rhetorical tenor of political discourse and perhaps on political conceptualization as well. Let me offer as an initial example a central paragraph from the Statement of Principles of a group called the National Jewish Organizing Project.*

> The authors of injustice and oppression in America are not Jewish. They are serving a set of social forms that is destroying Jews, and all

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* The full text of the statement is reproduced in the Fall 1969 issue of *Response*, a new Jewish student journal.

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Americans, as the Pharaohs destroyed the Israelites and all who lived in Egypt. We name the Pharaohs in Congress and the White House, who multiply the weapons that will someday burn us all to death. We name the Pharaohs in our great auto companies, who condemn the public to be mangled and die rather than spend their profits on a car that would protect its occupants. We name the Pharaohs in a hundred county courthouses and city jails and college administration buildings, who harass the young and break their freedom of speech and press. We name the Pharaohs who poison the air and water, the Pharaohs who build pyramids of steel and canals of concrete where once stood neighborhoods.

As an account of contemporary American society, this passage in its distortive intemperance is obviously of a piece with other kinds of New Left writing. One might note as a symptomatic expression of this mentality the paranoid certainty of "the weapons that will someday burn us all to death" where a sober assessment of the facts would have dictated at least the qualification of a future-conditional verb. The introduction of the pharaonic imagery does not change the fundamental view of America, though it would seem to increase the factor of distortion by inviting the writers to indulge in that most dangerous form of intellectual promiscuity, the melodramatization of politics. Midrashic exposition in general lacks all sense of historical perspective—which may be fine for the inculcation of a timeless divine law but is disastrous as a mode of political analysis. We are asked, apparently, to see a complete identity between the literal enslavement and mass infanticide reported in the biblical story, and the sundry institutional ills and inequities of contemporary America, conceived to be perpetrated everywhere by conscious despots of murderously malific intent. The casting, for example, of a Grayson Kirk or a Clark Kerr as a pharaoh in the administration building, harassing the young and breaking their freedom, reflects a ghastly absence of perspective on the concrete historical meaning of oppression, not to speak of a lack of all sense of humor. Incidentally, the composers of the statement do not hesitate to read back their own jaundiced view of the American present into the biblical past. The ancient pharaohs in their version destroy not merely the Israelites but "all who lived in Egypt," an implication of which the account in Exodus is quite innocent.

All of this has precisely the quality of a bad sermon: it insistently invokes the Bible as a trope for contemporary experience in a way that must strike a sensitive listener as both arbitrary and pretentious. From the elevation of their pulpit, the exhorters easily assume that they have a Mission to carry the eternal Word to the sons of men, though in the realm of politics there are many words, and none is always right: "The age of the individual prophet is over, but the prophetic voice and mission must rise from the People, the Community, the Movement." One might forgive this as, after all, a sincere statement of concern about injustice by serious young people were it not for the assumption of the prophetic burden, which is so self-important and spiritually vacuous. Such a politics of preachment, moreover, tends to assume, even without mentioning God's name, a quasi-divine and hence absolute authority for its own particular view of contemporary problems—always a dangerous assumption.

THE INITIATORS of the National Jewish Organizing Project are at least circumspect in beginning their Statement with the assertion that "Judaism is a religious civilization based on action"—Mordecai Kaplan, I fear, is being hustled to the barricades—but another group, the Jewish Liberation Project, is less inhibited in opening a working paper with the flat declaration that "True commitment to the Jewish tradition necessitates participation in revolutionary struggles." Historically, of course, this is nonsense. We have had a Judah Maccabee, we have had a Bar Kokhba, and those who are so inclined may say that "we" have had a Marx and a Trotsky, but there is not the slightest indication of a consensus on revolutionary politics in "the Jewish tradition." On the contrary, one finds in the traditions' wide variety of inferable or explicit political views a good deal of conservatism and political quietism. The proto-Hobbesian outlook of Rabbi Hanina (*Avot* 3:2) is one that found abundant echoes in the psychology and practical politics of Jews over the ages: "Pray for the welfare of the government, since were it not for fear of its authority, men would swallow each other alive."

I obviously don't mean to suggest that a Jew need accept any particular political view simply because it has been articulated in the tradition, but the converse, where one's own political views are imposed upon the tradition, is pernicious because it absolutizes politics, and one brand of politics at that. To the degree that the Jewish Liberation Project-ers are seriously thinking in terms of the authority of tradition and not merely using tradition as a rhetorical prop, a Jew like Nathan Glazer or Irving Kristol must seem not just a benighted political opponent but a hateful heretic who has renounced the eternal Law and the prophetic heritage to become the accomplice of satanic pharaohs. Jews may commendably choose commitments to responsible political activism but this hardly necessitates politicizing Judaism itself. The appropriation of Jewish tradition by the Jewish Organizers and Liberators points toward the general restriction of human richness and variety that would be effected by those forces now seeking to subject all spheres of life—religion, education, domestic relations, the arts—to an imperious political impulse.

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SURELY THE MOST bizarre instance of the tyranny of politics over religion among radical Jews is a document entitled *The Freedom Seder,** compiled by Arthur Waskow, a Fellow of the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C. and one of the moving spirits in the National Jewish Organizing Project. Waskow explains in an introductory note that the idea of a "liberation Haggadah" occurred to him during the Passover of 1968, a week after the murder of Martin Luther King, in the midst of "the April uprising of Black Washington against the blank-eyed pyramid-builders of our own time." Such a peculiar characterization of the events of April 1968 could be made only by someone who automatically identifies all black violence as an "uprising" against despots, and the body of Waskow's Haggadah is completely in keeping with the political thinking and the rhetoric of this initial statement. Within a sketchy framework adopted from the traditional Haggadah, Waskow introduces calls for "Liberation now!," the singing of "Solidarity Forever," the chant of "all power to the people," and a queer amalgam of quotations from Eldridge Cleaver, Herbert Marcuse, Allen Ginsberg, A. J. Muste, Thoreau, and Martin Buber.

Waskow's call for liberation reaches a crescendo-pitch in the concluding verse of his adaptation of *Dayeinu,* which sounds like a comic parody but is, of course, entirely serious: "How much then are we in duty bound to struggle, work, share, give, think, plan, feel, organize, sit-in, speak out, dream, hope, and be on behalf of Mankind! For we must end the genocide [in Vietnam]† . . . stop police brutality in many countries, free the poets from their jails, educate us all to understand their poetry, liberate us all to explore our inner ecstasies. . . ." The hollow hortatory tone of the politics of preachment is joined here with a total incapacity to make significant distinctions about the meanings of words and of different political situations. Of all peoples in a world that has lived through Auschwitz, Jews ought to be the last to accept mindlessly the propagandistic black-militant usage of "genocide," yet for Waskow that terrible term seems an equally appropriate rubric for, variously, the indiscriminate bombing of civilians in a civil war, for social and economic discrimination, cultural repression, and physical expulsion (of the items on his list, I leave out only the ruthless tribal persecution in Biafra, where there may be some justification for the term).

This inability to draw distinctions makes it dizzyingly easy for Waskow to identify Jewish tradition with the militant politics and the psychedelic sensibility fostered by the new mass culture of the young and the would-be young. At first glance, his updated Haggadah might seem to resemble those touchingly naive Haggadahs of the early kibbutz movement, where the four cups were drunk in pledges of solidarity to the workers of the world and bad Hebrew verses on the burgeoning soil were sung to sentimental melodies. There is, however, something much more wildly out of whack in Waskow's attempt to combine tradition and ideology, and I think it has to do with his nearly total lack of discrimination about language, values, ideas, and historical experience. Revealingly, he begins his Haggadah by paraphrasing the traditional *Havdalah* ceremony in the following manner: "Blessed art thou, O Lord . . . who makest a distinction between holy and equally holy: between the holiness of this festival and the equal holiness of the Sabbath; between the holiness of light and the equal holiness of darkness; between the holiness of the Jewish people and the equal holiness of other peoples." This may appear noble to some but it is profoundly un-Jewish. Traditional Jewish law in fact is built upon a hierarchy of holiness, with careful distinctions made among different levels and categories of holiness, and a sharp differentiation drawn between sacred and profane. The festival, in hard legal terms, is definitely not equal in holiness to the Sabbath, and, whether we find it palatable or not, the tradition clearly insists on the superior holiness of Israel to the other peoples. (On the question of divine election, the Reconstructionists are more honest in avowedly rejecting part of tradition rather than inventing a spurious tradition in consonance with their own values.) Later, at a culminating point in the Seder, Waskow's leveling approach to hierarchies of sanctity becomes offensively shrill when he inserts between the first two paragraphs of the *Hallel* (Psalms 113 and 114) a poem by Allen Ginsberg which begins with the word "holy" repeated fifteen times and then continues:

> *The world is holy! The soul is holy! The skin is holy! The nose is holy! The tongue and cock and hand and asshole holy!*
> *Everything is holy! everybody's holy! everywhere is holy! everyday is in eternity! Everyman's an angel!*

Aesthetically, of course, this is horrendous, not only because the stately linguistic decorum of the Psalms is interrupted by Ginsberg's assertively coarse language, but also because we are suddenly thrust from one of the peaks of world poetry to the bathos of this Whitmanesque doggerel gush. The violation of aesthetic frameworks, however, merely mirrors the more serious violation of a framework of value. As in the orgiastic Frankist sect of the 18th century, Judaism is here fused with its opposite, the cult of Dionysus, the cult which, according to Nietzsche, denies the principle of individuation, affirms the valueless,

* Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 56 pp., $3.95.

† "Insert any that is current—such as 'Biafra,' 'Black America,' 'Russia,' 'Poland,' etc.—depending on the situation" (Waskow's footnote).

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identityless unity of all in a holy universal surge of primordial energy.

Waskow, admittedly, seems primarily a political animal rather than a religious one, and the inclusion of the Ginsberg poem may reveal more about his bad taste than his serious theology, if he has any. Nevertheless, the annihilation of distinctions programmatically affirmed in the poem plays an important role in his enlistment of Jewish tradition in the "liberation" struggle. Holiness is everywhere, all mankind is Jewish, and the emblems of religious authority are dispensed as freely as dime-store police-badges at a child's birthday party. One may balk a little at Waskow's "Rabbi Buber," "Prophet Gandhi," and "Prophet Abraham Johannes Muste," but one could easily choke on "Ginsberg the Tzaddik" and "the Prophet Dylan," while "Rabbi Hannah Arendt" seems an open invitation to a crude guffaw. This absurdly gratuitous bestowing of titles makes sense only in terms of Waskow's need to invest political stances with religious authority, and of his consequent assumption that views resembling his own have a self-evident religious validation.

The process attains a grotesque extreme in the introduction of "the *shofet* Eldridge Cleaver (who went into exile like Moses)." A *shofet* is a biblical "judge," defined flatly in the text of *The Freedom Seder* as a "revolutionary leader." (Having thus absorbed revolutionaries into the tradition, the latter-day Haggadist feels free to set them in a single line with apostles of nonviolence.) It is curious that Waskow, who introduces a note of nationally self-lacerating moral sensitivity into his Passover service—"Search further, and inquire what our own fathers Moses and Joshua intended to do to our brothers the Canaanites"—should celebrate the *shoftim*, some of whom were no more than ruthless marauders or desperadoes, and who certainly mark one of the less edifying moments of biblical history. The *shoftim*, of course, fall within Waskow's canon because they can be seen as precursors of the Black Panthers and the FLN, which suggests that it is really contemporary politics that gives its stamp of approval to tradition, and not the other way around: it is hardly surprising that Waskow's text was first published in *Ramparts*. Waskow does not mention that the place of exile elected by the Moses-like Cleaver is Algeria, one of the world's hotbeds of hatred for Israel, and that from this choice location Cleaver has been urging the destruction of the Jewish state with increasing stridency. At this rate, one may well look for the appearance of the *shofet* Yassir Arafat in a future edition of *The Freedom Seder*.

WASKOW'S HAGGADAH is in a very literal psychological sense a perversion because it is a document of self-loathing and self-abasement masquerading as an expression of self-affirmation. In this regard, the fuzzy role in his text played by Israel is symptomatic of his wavering sense of identity. Waskow is not explicitly anti-Zionist—though, as we have seen, he does not hesitate to cite the authority of anti-Zionists—but the existence of Israel makes him clearly uncomfortable in important respects. For other "progressive" peoples, nationalism is an unquestioned birthright, but the Jew is obliged to be, first and last, a universalist. Thus, when Waskow cites the traditional Seder phrase, "This year here, next year in the land of Israel," he must hasten to assure us that he is not a Zionist white colonizer preparing to move into the territory of a Third-World people: "And as another tradition says, '*Ubi libertas, ibi patria*'—where there is liberty, that is my country. That is my Israel." One notes how when a Jew ceases to be a Jew he becomes either a pagan or a Christian or, as in Waskow's case, both. Just as John the Divine transformed a flesh-and-blood people into a universal spiritual symbol of "true Israel," Waskow converts the revolutionary fact of the reborn Jewish state into a facile moral abstraction, letting others worry about the fate of two million Jews threatened with destruction, while he continues to "dream, hope, and be on behalf of Mankind." At this enormous remove from the agonizing political realities of Israel, it is easy enough to intone moralistic accusations about Israel's abandoning of the prophetic legacy. Characteristically, in a quasi-poem by Marilyn Lowen appended to *The Freedom Seder*, Moshe Dayan is introduced as "that decadent prophet," and then a quotation from Dayan, wrenched violently out of context, is offered to make him look like a savage and bloody-minded oppressor of innocent Arabs.*

The self-effacement before black militancy that underlies the Waskow Haggadah culminates in Marilyn Lowen's poem, where Jewish self-hatred and white self-hatred combine: "our brothers our cousins/ our black our brown family/ before we were bleached/ in this desert of exile/ we too were healthy in color." One might think that if the poet were so distressed as a Jew about her deficient pigmentation, she might move to Israel, where more than half the Jewish population is happily unbleached, with marriage between white and "colored" Jews a healthily growing phenomenon. But her poem, which ends with a prayer to be "next year in the THIRD WORLD," explicitly prefers Cairo to Jerusalem: "This PASSOVER/ we beseech thee O Lord/ Deliver us back into Egypt/ that we may join with our/ broth-

* One may disagree with particular Dayan policies and yet safely affirm that he has infinitely more genuine understanding of and respect for Arabs as people than any prophetess like Miss Lowen. See, for example, Shlomo Avineri's references in these pages to Dayan on the Arabs in his article, "The Palestinians and Israel," June 1970.

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ers." If Miss Lowen is interested in knowing what the *Arab* attitude toward dark pigmentation actually has been, I would refer her to "Arabs and Negroes" (*Encounter*, August 1970), a beautifully documented essay by Bernard Lewis, the distinguished historian of Islam, but I make the rather unrealistic assumption that this sort of implacable self-rejection is susceptible to change through education. Jewish self-hatred is an all-too-familiar phenomenon. What is relatively new about this latest version—at least for Jews who have turned to political activism—is that it comes gaudily wrapped in a maxi-length prophetic mantle, the renunciation of Jewish ties made in the name of a higher Judaism.

One might note that the habit of approaching political issues with a holier-than-thou moralism has of late been encouraged by some established Jewish religious leaders. In this respect, it is instructive that Waskow should simultaneously revile the Jewish Establishment and seek its endorsement for his enterprise. Among the authorities whose help he acknowledges at the end of *The Freedom Seder* is the president of the Jewish Theological Seminary, Bernard Mandelbaum (who has since vehemently dissociated himself from Waskow), and Balfour Brickner, a senior administrator of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Elsewhere, in the first trial issue of *Sh'ma*, a new "journal of Jewish responsibility," distinctly Waskovian wavelengths emanate from a piece by Rabbi Arnold Jacob Wolf, who presides over one of the most prosperous Reform congregations in the country. Denouncing supposed Jewish complacency about the invasion of Cambodia and the Kent State killings, Wolf argues that Jews are now afraid to criticize American foreign and domestic policy because of their "cowardly acquiescence to Israel," a conclusion that could be reached only through the now fashionable habit of contemplating one's own need to feel moral about politics, not by any serious observation of the political activities and voting patterns of American Jews.

It is finally hard to take seriously any of the religious paraphernalia of *The Freedom Seder* because Waskow's enterprise is so clearly the crude political rape of a religious tradition. At a rather different point on the political-religious spectrum, a Los Angeles group called the Radical Jewish Community enacted another kind of innovative Seder on the fourth day of Passover 1970, starting at a place called Goshen Avenue and moving on to the seashore and then to a hilly desert. This singular event is reported in detail by Richard N. Levy in the same trial issue of *Sh'ma* that featured Arnold Wolf's sermonic obituary for the old Jewish liberalism. The difference in tone between the Los Angeles Haggadah and Waskow's is strikingly illustrated by the words of instruction with which the Jewish Radical Community begins its service:

> YHVH are four English letters corresponding to the four Hebrew letters comprising *Ha-Shem*, the "NAME" (*yud heh vav heh*). It does not correspond to the idol of the so-called Judeo-Christian tradition, "God." The "NAME" is meant to connote that which can never be pronounced or understood in a word, and that which all words vainly struggle to express. We shall consequently never pronounce YHVH in the form of the spoken word. Instead, YHVH will be expressed among us in the form of one or two minutes of silent groping meditation.

This at least sounds like the expression of a serious religious awareness—instead of a self-advertising hullabaloo of holy-holy's, an attempt to be still and feel the presence of real holiness; instead of the politics of preachment, with its easy arrogation of absolute authority for relative political views, a sense of spiritual humility in the face of the Absolute. The Radical Jewish Community, to be sure, does have an acute political consciousness, drawing upon the simplistic conspiratorial visions of modern society cherished by the New Left. "And the Amerikans drowned our pride," this Haggadah says of what is conceived as the latest Jewish enslavement, "in hardworking powerless affluence so that our synagogues became haunted echo chambers." The bit about the haunted echo chambers is not bad, but to attribute the inner emptiness of American-Jewish life to the sinister conspiracy of a quasi-Nazi American Establishment is the kind of shameful evasion of historical reality and responsibility that collective paranoia always invites. More interesting is the way the Radical Jewish Community joins its political awareness with a very contemporary sense of the magical expressive power of ritual. The ceremonial parsley is dipped not in any piddling bowl of salt water but in the ocean itself, which enables the celebrants to remind themselves that the sea is the source and sustainer of all life, that its waters were once pure, and so: "May the dirt and bitterness we are about to taste remind us of the bitterness of our polluted waters."

STILL IN pursuit of immediate contact with primal realities, the young radicals roast a lamb in sacrificial style, with head and legs and innards, on the coals of an open fire, announcing, "We reject the phoney token shankbone which the Jewish Establishment puts on our Pesach Seder plate. . . . It is neat and sterile and too easily stuck into the back corner of our minds as are the grueling facts of ghetto life, the devastation of wars and the conniving warping of free spirits." The tone at such moments becomes stridently aggressive, the sweeping of all real and suspected grievances onto the Seder plate having the effect of converting the Season of Our Rejoicing into a feast of resentment. What may nevertheless give some ground of legitimation to the Radi-

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cal Jewish Community's experiment with the Seder ritual is its professed sense of religious experience as an orientation toward ultimates that are beyond politics. Praise is properly given to God "As the One (YHVH) / The true source of our liberation power . . . not to any gun or man or politics or nation or idea . . . but to the all which embraces all of these." But despite the religious soundness of this particular affirmation, other statements by the Radical Community people make one wonder precisely where ideology ends and faith begins. These young radicals seem intent enough in their effort to recover a real sense of spiritual awe, yet their service mingles the stillness of prayer with the grating insistence of propagandistic clichés, and the edge of their resentment against the "Jewish Establishment" unwittingly cuts back through two millennia to the framers of tradition in the Second Commonwealth who established the Seder ritual that has been transmitted to us.

IF THE BLEND, therefore, of activism and Judaism attempted by the Los Angeles group is untinged with Waskow's homiletic hypocrisy, it is nevertheless Jewishly self-defeating, for, as Richard Levy justly observes, this insistence on an original and more "authentic" ritual has all the earmarks of a sect breaking away from the parent body. This is hardly the first time that Jews, disgusted with the emptiness of established religion, have gone into the desert to eat locusts, lamb, or other strange fare, and to restore the purity of the ancestral faith. Yet as a matter of historical fact, it was not the white-garbed apocalyptic sects in the wilderness but the practical Pharisees, articulating a public law in their academies, who transmitted the biblical vision to Jewish posterity. In any case, the Radical Jewish Community, though hardly a surprising development of the new Jewish radicalism, is by no means typical of it. What seems most representative of the new mood among Jewishly inclined radicals is a leftist militant Jewish nationalism, basically political and secular in nature, but not programmatically secularist like the Zionist Left of an earlier generation. I am not sure whether there are yet any reliable estimates of the numerical strength of this movement, but my impression is that it is growing. Last year about fifty campus groups in the United States and Canada joined to form a loose coalition called the Radical Zionist Alliance, and, at least to judge by the Berkeley campus this fall, such groups may be generating appreciably more interest and support among Jewish students this year.

A characteristic focus of activity for the radical Zionists is the organization newspaper, intended for circulation among a much larger body of students, Gentiles as well as Jews. Though these publications contain a predictable share of New Left clichés, Marxist or Marcusean pieties, and bad student writing, one also encounters in them a surprising amount of serious reflection and careful analysis, and even a good deal of hard information on the Middle East—often translated from the Israeli press—not easily available elsewhere in English. The young editors and columnists are impelled to affirm their solidarity with progressive forces almost as a matter of self-respect, yet they are by and large refreshingly free of the doctrinaire partisan mentality of more conventional radical groups. If, for example, the outspoken Israeli letfist journalist, Amos Kenan, is reprinted in these publications with conspicuous frequency, one can also find lengthy excerpts from articles by people like J. L. Talmon, Shlomo Avineri, and Yehoshafat Harkabi who could hardly be called New Left writers. It is something of a relief to discover a group of "politicized" young Americans for whom the truth is not a matter of ideological orthodoxy.

In organizational terms, many of the groups in the Radical Zionist Alliance were formed in reaction to the political quiescence or "Establishment" nature of the Hillel Foundations at various campuses. Politically, the groups are a deliberate beachhead of counter-attack against the anti-Israel sentiment rampant in New Left circles. In the pages of their newspapers, the young writers insist on the legitimacy of Zionism as a movement of national liberation; denounce Arab terrorism; point out the alliance of Al Fatah with reactionary forces in the Arab world; excoriate the program of genocide—here the word is precise—directed by the Sudanese Arabs against the Sudanese blacks; call attention to the more enlightened of the policies that Israel has adopted toward the Arabs under its rule. They do not hesitate to criticize Israeli government policy harshly, but do not differ in this respect from perfectly patriotic Israeli groups with which they tend to align themselves, ranging from *Siah* (Israel's New Left, a very small, vehemently anti-administration movement, though not anti-Zionist like Matzpen) to the more dovish Old Left Mapam people (like Simha Flapan, editor of the *New Outlook*) and the non-party peace activists in the Israeli academic community. They also do not hesitate to criticize figures like the *shofet* Eldridge Cleaver who in one issue of the Berkeley *Jewish Radical* is roundly rebuked for his pro-Arab stance and reminded that he once thought Zionism a worthy model for black emulation. *Aliyah* is, I would guess, a more seriously-weighed alternative for the new radical Zionists than for any group of young American Jews since the Zionist youth movements of the late 40's, and some of the young people actually make the move to Israel soon after graduation. They all seem to have a powerful sense of *klal yisrael*, of a worldwide community of Jews; and so protest over the persecution of Russian Jewry has become their great passionate cause after Israel—a protest which is, to say the least, a far wor-

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thier expense of spirit than denouncing the Pharaohs in the college-administration buildings.

The tenor of these new Zionist groups is vividly conveyed by a trenchant review of *The Freedom Seder* that appeared in a mimeographed publication called the *Jewish Liberation Journal,* issued in New York, apparently by students having some connection with Columbia University. The author of the review, Itzhak Epstein, is identified as Israeli-born and educated in America, but his views do not differ noticeably from those of his native American associates. Fresh from participation in the initial enactment of Waskow's Seder during Passover 1969, Epstein is willing to commend the nobility of Waskow's progressive aspirations. He is, however, dismayed by the contortions of *The Freedom Seder*'s universalist bias which, in his view, wholly destroy the original character of the Seder as a celebration of the national liberation of the Jews. "From reading this revised Haggadah," Epstein pointedly observes, "one could not begin to guess that the State of Israel was reborn in our lifetime"; indeed, Waskow's text "gives the overall impression that the most significant contemporary Jewish experience is the 'Black revolution.'" Epstein never actually uses the word "self-abasement" to characterize *The Freedom Seder*—Waskow is, after all, a brother in The Movement—yet this is clearly what most disturbs him as a self-respecting Jew about the liberation Haggadah. He notes the oddness of a Jew quoting from the teachings of black radicals in order to please them and gain their respect. "For anyone to understand and respect *my* tradition, I would have to quote to him from Leon Pinsker, Ber Borokhov, Ahad Ha-am, Y. L. Peretz, A. D. Gordon, Hanna Senesch, Amos Kenan, and the more political writings of Martin Buber." This is sane and above all honest: there is no pietistic posing here, no invocation of Moses and Isaiah and the Baal Shem Tov, but a plain statement of real indebtedness to a varied line of figures, great and small, whose universalism is expressed in a humane, reflective commitment to particularist survival.

At a time when the union of socialism with nationalist awakening is suddenly the great political aspiration of "progressive" people everywhere, it is surely worth noting that the Zionists were the first to articulate this program on a serious scale, and in a period when doctrinaire internationalism was vehemently professed by all other social-revolutionary groups. It is understandable that Ber Borokhov, the major theoretician in the pre-Revolutionary period of the *Poalei Zion,* the Russian Left Labor Zionists, who used a Marxist analysis to argue for the historical necessity of Jewish national autonomy, should now become a hero for the new Jewish radicals. As they repeatedly contend, socialist movements today might learn a great deal from Zionism if they were not so busy denouncing it as a cancerous imperialist growth.

What the juxtaposition of a Waskow and an Epstein may suggest is that Jews can be fully credible in making Jewishness the explicit basis for their political commitments only if they begin by affirming some sense of connection with a polity of Jews. For nearly two centuries Jews have expended a vast wealth of ingenuity in denying or compromising their Jewish identity, in evading its human bonds and responsibilities by professing to assume instead a loftier Mission for all mankind. It is encouraging, then, in a political scene that offers so little cause for encouragement, to find articulate, politically-conscious young Jews who are sure enough of themselves to be themselves. As a final illustration of this new mood among some of the radical Jewish youth in this country, I would like to cite an exchange on universalism that appeared last winter in the Berkeley *Jewish Radical.* Shelley Schreter, a graduate student in sociology, developed with some care a theoretical justification for the need to introduce cultural particularism into a Marxist materialist analysis of history. National and ethnic cultures in themselves, he argued, "embody a fundamental attribute of human existence," and for this reason universalism could never mean the eradication of particularism. "On the contrary," Schreter concludes, "it is *by way of* the particular contexts that people reach *authentic* universalism" (his italics). Now, this may seem a reasonable enough position, envisaging a kind of particularism in which a people, through a proud sense of its own distinctive integrity, becomes aware of its implication in a larger human community. For David Biale, however, who published a rejoinder to Schreter in the next issue of the *Jewish Radical,* the very mention of universalism as the ultimate goal raises fears of the blight of Waskowism: "Perhaps we don't all want to be universalists first and foremost; perhaps we want to be more self-confident than the sort of Jew who must always be defending himself against accusations of clannishness with ready rationales."

One young radical Zionist has suggested to me that the split between his kind of people and Waskow's is a new version of the old opposition between Zionists and Bundists. Waskow himself seems ready to encourage the comparison: in "The Jewish Contradiction" (New York *Times,* October 21, 1970), a clarion call for Isaiah's people to work for Isaiah's vision, he claims that some of the "young, committed, Diaspora-centered Jews" have discovered and adopted the Bund as a historical model. The comparison, however, does considerable injustice to the Bund, for the Bundists, despite their anti-Zionism and their denial of an international Jewish community, had a strong, self-affirmative sense at least of

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Russian Jewry as a distinctive national culture. They left the Russian Socialist party in 1903 because they were not allowed to participate in it as an autonomous national group, and for much the same reason, the Polish Bund in the 1920's refused to join the International. (There is an element of truth in Lenin's famous quip that Bundists were merely Zionists who were afraid of a sea-voyage.) Unlike the Jewish Organizers and Liberators, theirs was not a parlor-and-pulpit socialism, for the Bundists had a large and serious constituency among the Jewish proletariat, whose lot they worked to improve; and as honest secularists, they were never guilty of pompously invoking Jewish ritual and myth in an implicit renunciation of their own rights to historical self-determination as Jews.

What seems to be happening today among radicals who stress their Jewishness, under the impetus of the new particularism and the new traditionalism, is a more extreme polarization than existed among such groups in the past. The self-deniers, for all their prophetical-rabbinic guise, are a world away from those Jews who refuse to renounce their prerogatives as the members of a people that deserves an equal place among the nations of the earth, not in some visionary *Heilesgeschichte* but in real historical time. At a moment when young people and intellectuals in this country are staging spectacles of self-degradation on such an unprecedented scale, one must be grateful that there are at least some young Jews for whom the generations to come will not have to blush.

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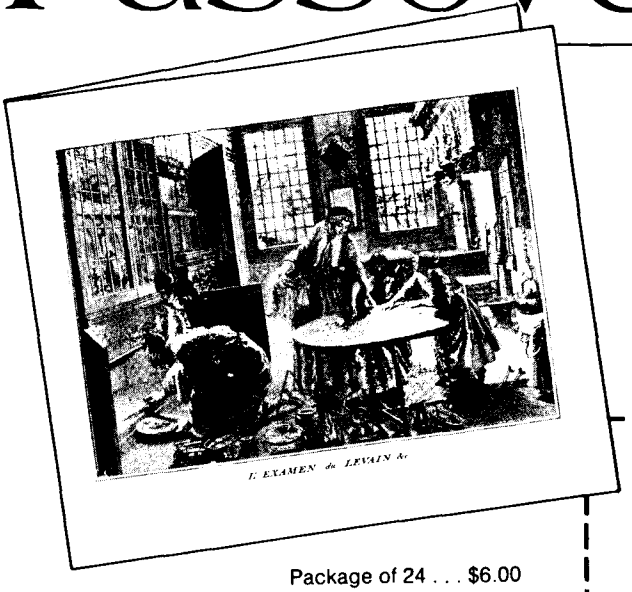

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Revolutionism & the Jews: 3

The Role of the Intellectuals

Nathan Glazer

It is notoriously difficult to frame a definition of "intellectuals" that will serve for all times and all issues, but let me suggest a working one: Intellectuals are people who make a living from ideas, and are in varying degrees directly influenced by ideas. Thus they live off ideas and they live for ideas. Politically, as we know, the intellectuals have in general been critical of established institutions and values, sometimes from the Right, much more often from the Left. Only very rarely have they been conservative in the sense of approving of established institutions and values.

Intellectuals possess most of the attributes of an interest group: they are concentrated in a limited number of occupations, they commonly share a certain orientation to society. Nevertheless, is there any point in talking about them as a distinctive group in relation to other groups in the United States? In talking about intergroup relations, we know we will have to talk about Jews, Catholics, Protestants; about whites and blacks and other deprived non-white or quasi-white groups; about skilled workers, the lower-middle class of white-collar workers and low-paid professionals, the upper-middle class of better-paid professionals and managers and proprietors; about the urban underclass and the suburbs. But why is it necessary to talk about intellectuals? Are they not encompassed in these other groups? In a measure of course they are. And yet there are a number of recent developments in American society that make it to my mind more and more relevant to speak of intellectuals as a distinct group affecting the future of group relations in America.

First, intellectuals have found a new locus, a home, which is quite different from their previous locations, and which is itself far more central in American life: this is of course the university and college campus. Now there have always been intellectuals in universities and colleges, but I think it is true to say that throughout the period between the two world wars the main seat of American intellectuals was Greenwich Village (and even to some extent Paris), their outlets a few magazines of small circulation, their institutions *ad hoc* associations designed generally for political purposes. There were at best a few friendly publishing houses—and even these were not run by intellectuals. One can get a sense of this world, and some notion of the narrow hold intellectuals then had on American life, from Daniel Aaron's book, *Writers on the Left.* In the 1920's—and indeed up through the end of World War II—no one would have dreamed of going to the colleges and universities to find out what was happening in American intellectual life. One need only look at the college literature of this period—a good compendium is A. C. Spectorsky's *The College Years*—to see how great a distance there was between the American campus and the central, shaping ideas of the time.

The great change in this situation began to take shape after World War II, symbolized perhaps by the fact that William Phillips and Philip Rahv, the editors of that key intellectual journal of the 1940's, *Partisan Review,* became college professors. But so indeed did most of their contributors. Yet this was only the most superficial aspect of the change. Originally intellectuals in the academy thought of themselves as outsiders—a Leslie Fiedler teaching at Montana, an Irving Howe teaching at Stanford and Hunter, a C. Wright Mills teaching at Columbia, might quite easily see their role in the academy as peripheral. Intellectuals first, college professors by chance. But as time went on, the curriculum of the colleges and universities became more contemporary, in part under the influence of the intellectuals themselves who in turn became more numerous, particularly in the younger academic ranks. Then, beginning with a bang at Berkeley in 1964, the political concerns that were so important to intellectuals began to become more important on the campus, once again pushing intellectuals into a larger role. From being

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marginal to university life, intellectuals became central.

A second development paralleled the move of intellectuals *into* the universities, and their growing influence there: this was the enormous increase *in* the universities themselves, in their student bodies, which now number seven million, and in their faculties, which now approach 600,000. Thus, not only was a new field of action captured: the field of action itself became immeasurably more important. It reached many more, proportionately and absolutely, of the youth, it involved an ever higher share of the Gross National Product, it had closer and more significant relations with government—relations which, when sentiment on the campus turned against the government, could be used to influence government policy. But even before they began making sensational copy for the mass media late in 1964, colleges and universities were increasingly becoming a focal point of interest—for businessmen, for politicians, for the mass media, and all the more, of course, with the subsequent spread of student revolt.

THE CAPTURE of a new and growing field of action for intellectuals did not mean giving up old fields of action. Quite the contrary. In the past, intellectuals had controlled a few magazines with tiny circulations. *Partisan Review*, despite its great influence, had a circulation of less than 8,000 in the middle 1950's; COMMENTARY never went above 25,000 until after 1960. The circulation of other intellectual magazines was far below these figures, and the intellectual weeklies, the *Nation* and the *New Republic*, struggled along with a few tens of thousands. Intellectuals controlled no publishing houses, despite their heavy contribution of literary properties. In the mass media—magazines, radio and television, newspapers—they played almost no role at all.

The transformation in this general area has been as phenomenal as in the case of the universities and colleges. The circulation of intellectual magazines has generally increased in an extraordinary degree, while many of the mass magazines such as *Esquire* and *Playboy* regularly publish leading figures of the intellectual world, and not as ornaments alone, but as valued contributors who provide perhaps one of the strongest selling points for these periodicals. Publishing houses are now typically controlled by young editors, with strong ties to the present-day intellectual community. TV production staffs often share the concerns of intellectuals, and increasingly even newspaper reporters are to be considered intellectuals. All this is only a natural consequence of the intellectual conquest of the campuses, since editors, producers, and reporters are almost always recruited from the campuses.

Finally, there is one other factor that has contributed greatly to an expansion of the role of intellectuals: this is the inability of the American hinterland to develop spokesmen and leaders of substance. By the hinterland I mean the people, probably still the majority, that H. L. Mencken abused as the booboisie and that Sinclair Lewis satirized—people who were attracted in varying numbers to the Ku Klux Klan, Father Coughlin's Social Justice movement, isolationism, McCarthyism, Senator Goldwater, and Governor Wallace. One describes this phenomenon with hesitation, because it has a shifting make-up and constituency. The kind of social groupings (for example, small-town businessmen and professionals, city shopkeepers, policemen) from whom supporters of an anti-Catholic movement such as the American Protective Association in the 1890's were drawn will be found in support of the radical Right today; but today these groupings include Catholics. The constant element would seem to be an exclusivist (or, following Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab in *The Politics of Unreason*, a "preservatist") tendency, and one finds it among those who have not done too badly, but also not too well; who are not exposed to cosmopolitan—"intellectual"—influences; who are suspicious of foreigners and of new ideas.

This exclusivist tendency, I submit, is weaker today in America than ever before. When one remembers how many distinguished political leaders and even intellectual leaders supported American exclusivism during the fight against immigration in the 20's, during the heyday of isolationism in the 30's, during the anti-Communist purge of the later 40's and 50's—one is simply astonished at the almost complete absence of any such respectable support for right-wing tendencies in America today.

There are many reasons for this: the collapse, militarily and intellectually, of fascism is certainly one, but the main reason, I would guess, is that it has become very nearly impossible for conservative, let alone reactionary, thinking to flourish in the colleges and universities during the past two decades. And since the universities and colleges now provide almost all the intellectual leadership we have, there is precious little such leadership to be found for rightist constituencies. Thus there now exists no powerful force within the intellectual world to challenge the intellectuals on the Left.* Even many Cath-

* It would be interesting to study the cases in which books are purged from libraries and teachers fired for putting radical or avant-garde writers into school curricula. It is my impression that the number of such cases declines steadily, even though the fare in question (e.g., Eldridge Cleaver) is much stronger. (By contrast, the New York *Times* attacks the United States Information Service for the effrontery of adding perfectly conventional and respectable conservative literature to its libraries.) The *feelings* still persist that would lead to book-banning. Those who have these feelings, however, seem to have lost their former self-confidence.

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olic schools and colleges are now dominated by the concerns and ideas of the Left intellectuals, and form no bulwark, as to some extent they once did, against intellectual domination.

One can point to two facts which suggest the extent of this dominance by the intellectuals of the Left. Until the 1950's, the distinctions between highbrow, middlebrow, and lowbrow were universally considered critical in discussing American culture and American intellectual life. They have quite disappeared—but not because, as many in the 40's and 50's argued would happen, highbrow ideas have been coopted and swallowed up by middlebrow culture. Quite the contrary: I believe that highbrow ideas, the ideas which were sharply critical of the bourgeoisie and its culture, have by now captured the old audience of the middlebrow. The loss of confidence and nerve that follows when the bourgeoisie is inundated by an anti-bourgeois culture—which is just what is happening today—can scarcely be exaggerated.

A second fact: For a long time, analysts of the campus scene made a distinction between elite and non-elite schools. The non-elite schools maintained a collegiate, anti-intellectual culture; the elite schools, while they included such tendencies, also maintained an intellectual culture. Today it is no longer possible to make an important distinction between the two kinds of campus. There is one culture, and Kent State is a part of it no less than Princeton. Despite its strong anti-rational—and therefore anti-intellectual—bias, it is a culture molded by the intellectuals: by their ideas and attitudes, even if their ideas and attitudes are no longer communicated through reasoned discussion.

II

If it is true that the intellectuals are a distinct grouping within American society, it is also true that a high proportion of the members of this group are Jews. Recent studies of college faculties, the largest single concentration of intellectuals, report that Jews, who form 3 per cent of the American population, or less, characteristically form more than a third of the faculties of elite schools, and more than 10 per cent of the faculty population as a whole. Among college students, from whom intellectuals are recruited, there is a similar picture (though the proportion of Jews among students is smaller than it is among faculty). The change is not only visible on the campus, however. Publishing, which as late as the mid-1950's was a field in which few Jews worked, has been transformed in the past fifteen years into a largely Jewish industry. In the field of mass entertainment, of course—especially movies and popular music—there have been large numbers of Jews for a long time. But in the past two decades this field too has been "intellectualized" to an astonishing extent. Song lyrics are no longer confined, as we well know, to moon and June, which used pretty well to sum them up. So too with movies and mass magazines.

Because so many intellectuals are Jews (even if most Jews are not intellectuals), one of the most serious issues affecting the position of Jews in general during the coming years may very well stem from the circumstance that it was intellectuals—college students, faculty members, intellectual periodicals, the "intellectualized" mass media—who most strongly opposed American participation in the Vietnam war, and who in addition attacked and overthrew the traditional restraints—on sexual behavior, on anti-authoritarian behavior, on violent behavior in certain settings—that had been established in American society.

To consider the war first: I have always believed American intervention in Vietnam to have been a terrible mistake and a disaster from the beginning, and that we only evaded this recognition—and still evade it—through the typical American pattern of trying to reverse a failure of policy by technological means, in this case massive destruction. But in this I only reflect the views of . . . intellectuals. I do not believe that even now the majority of the American people see the matter in this way. They can select quite different facts for emphasis, and interpret the same facts differently: that it was the boys who did not go to college who fought the war, the children of "Middle America"; that it was the boys who stayed behind, who were part of the intellectual class, or hoped to become part of it, and their teachers, who opposed the war and made impossible a united national commitment to those fighting it; that the war was lost in large measure because the intellectuals undermined patriotism, nationalism, the authority of government and army. The conceivable end of this line of thinking—and many of the parents and relatives of the 300,000 dead and maimed Americans may take it—is that the intellectuals are responsible, the "faggots," as the construction workers in New York call the students, the longhairs, and (if the inhibitions against anti-Semitism raised by the war against Hitler should be overcome) finally the Jews.

I think anyone who looks to the future in America must consider this possibility—almost a probability—of the rise of a stab-in-the-back myth, in which it will not only be students and professors and intellectuals who are attacked, and not only Jews in their role as members of this general community, but conceivably Jews *as Jews*. The parallel between Weimar and America is often raised. There are many, many differences. And yet this parallel cannot be dismissed. We must end the war—that is the first order of business. But let no one deceive himself that all will

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be well when the country contemplates a futile and useless and costly war, the first war it has lost, as President Nixon reminds us, in its history.

As serious in its implications for potential conflict between the intellectuals and "Middle America," and therefore for Jews because of their prominence among the intellectuals, is the radical transformation in the tone of moral discourse and of the character of private and public behavior in the United States in the past ten years. If, for example, one considers the flooding of the bookstores with what until recently was considered hard-core pornography and was illegal to print, import, or distribute, one finds that Jews have been prominent in this revolution. The Jewish role in any case would be large because it was in paperback publishing and distributing that Jews made their mark in publishing in the 50's. (As is true with all new entrepreneurs in an established field, they had to find new product lines.) Similarly with the transformation of films to the point where the family movie has become a small part of the whole. Similarly with the liberalization of abortion laws, in which Jewish state legislators in California and New York played a leading role. Some of the chief propagandists for drugs during this period—Allen Ginsberg, Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin—have been Jews too, as have many leaders of the attack on authority—the authority of school administrators, policemen, government officials. Obviously Jews are not the only people who have been involved in this moral revolution. Obviously, too, much of it has been directed against an outmoded and provincial puritanism, and much of it represents a real advance of freedom. But the moral revolution in Weimar Germany also had much to commend it—the 20's in Germany were indeed one of the great cultural eras in world history—and many besides Jews were involved. That did not prevent Hitler from successfully blaming the moral "degeneration" of Germany on the influence of the Jews.

Anyone concerned for the future of Jews in America who sees what the intellectuals have accomplished will certainly think twice before applauding or rejoicing in the Jewish role in the transformation of the United States. This revolution was carried out in the cosmopolitan centers, and spread to the hinterland. After all, the hinterland does not make its own movies, publish its own books, produce its own television programs. It takes what the cosmopolis gives it. And I believe there is a good deal of resentment over what the cosmopolis has been giving it. Now conceivably the cultural victory is so complete that there is no longer any effective way for the hinterland to fight back. Its children, too, in large measure oppose the war in Vietnam, approve the new sexual freedom, smoke pot, and thumb their noses at authority. Perhaps America will simply lick its wounds, and blame no one but its own ignorance, arrogance, and *hubris* for the disaster of Vietnam. But we see here, in the potential backlash at what the intellectuals have done in relation to Vietnam and to the overturning of traditional moral values, perhaps the greatest single danger to Jews in the next ten years.

III

THE PROSPECTS are equally ominous when we turn our attention from what the intellectuals have done to what they have thought and said and the impact of their ideas on the country.

There are three aspects of the thinking of intellectuals that are troubling for the Jewish position. First is the disappearance of any important group of intellectuals or stream of intellectual activity that finds anything positive or good about America and American life. There was a unique moment in the 1950's when the intellectuals approved of a good deal about America. This had not been the case, at least not on such a scale, since the early decades after the founding of the Republic. Intellectuals, true to their calling, had attacked, and quite properly, American expansionism in foreign wars (Mexico), slavery, big business, political corruption, imperialism, materialism. In the late 1940's and 50's, in the aftermath of a war against the unmitigated evil of Nazism, and when we were confronted in the Soviet Union by a foreign enemy that combined in paramount degree dictatorial brutality and cultural vulgarity, intellectuals for the first time in a hundred years discovered something to celebrate in America: its encouragement of group life of various kinds; its ability to change without violence; its altruistic and generous assistance to war-ravaged countries; its openness to foreign and immigrant influence; its relative classlessness.

All this, of course, has changed. America is *not* approved of by the intellectuals today. Its encouragement of group life is denounced as hypocritical sham; its ability to change without violence is radically questioned (violence indeed is given more praise and more support than was ever dreamed possible—and by intellectuals); its foreign role is seen as an expression of the most brutal, cruel, and selfish of imperialisms.

This change in the way intellectuals think is bound to have consequences for Jews. A country in which the authority of government is undermined, a society in which violence becomes more common and more accepted, do not represent an environment in which Jews will flourish. Jews, in fact, have already been hurt by violence. Given the oddities of Jewish social distribution, it is the property of Jews that gets destroyed when there is rioting in the ghettos, just as the long-

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haired students in New York who are attacked by enraged construction workers are likely to be Jews and just as it turns out that three of the four students who were killed at Kent State were Jews. At present all these are simply statistical consequences of Jewish distribution. What one must fear is that the actual statistical associations will enter the consciousness of the violent ones, and the old anti-Semitic, conspiratorial explanations of conflict, tragedy, and failure will be revived.

But it is not only the possibilities of backlash here which constitute a threat to Jews. The greater danger is that American opinion in general will be influenced by the view prevalent among intellectuals of the American role in world politics. American intervention has in the past helped Jews in cases where they were being persecuted. Many trends—in particular the increasing circumspection with which the influence of great powers is or can be used—reduce the value of this source of possible aid for threatened Jewish interests, including, of course, aid to Israel in the form of arms. But it is further reduced if public opinion, influenced by intellectuals, comes to assume that American intervention is always and inevitably selfish, or imperialist, or racist in character. In this case, obloquy may even fall upon those for whom American help is intended.

Similarly, in the domestic sphere, if America is believed to be inherently discriminatory and racist in its treatment of minority groups, then the very success—economic, political, cultural—of the Jewish group becomes suspect: it becomes a success based on collaboration with the enemy. This is already the argument that is made by those Jewish members of the New Left who are professedly most sympathetic to Jews; they see the Jewish position in this country not as the product of worthy Jewish effort in a benign environment, but as the consequence of an unmanly accommodation by the "Uncle Jakes" to an arrogant, racist society. Here, then, is another way in which the assault on the reputation of America—an assault which has already succeeded in reducing this country, in the eyes of many American intellectuals, to outlaw status—must affect the position of Jews.

THERE IS a second aspect of the current outlook of intellectuals that one must soberly consider as a factor of potential influence on the position of Jews. This is the view now held by most intellectuals of the moral quality of Jewish life, both in the United States and in Israel. Nazism, fascism, the Second World War, the slaughter of the six million, and the almost miraculous creation of the State of Israel with the remarkable momentary support of both the United States and Soviet Russia—all this combined for a time to raise Jewish prestige among intellectuals to the highest level it had reached since the intelligentsia emerged in Europe, regardless of whether we date that emergence from the Reformation, the Enlightenment, or the Industrial Revolution. Intellectuals had never thought well of Jews before. Until the late 19th century, Jews were conceived of as medieval, backward, money-grasping, clannish. Even those Jews who joined with the radical intellectuals, pouring into the socialist parties of Europe and becoming some of their leading theoreticians, were ready to adopt a view of their own people as either medievalists or capitalists. Throughout the 19th century, and right through the history of fascism, there was, in addition, always a body of influential right-wing intellectuals who held exactly the same view of the Jews, the only difference in this respect being that on the Right there was no Jewish participation to moderate the excesses of anti-Semitism.

All this changed in World War II and its aftermath. Indeed, there has never been such a wave of philo-Semitism among intellectuals as that which rose to flood tide in 1945—and, I would suggest now, ebbed in 1967. Many factors contributed to the ebbing of the philo-Semitic outlook of the intellectuals. One was the overwhelming military victory of Israel in 1967. Intellectuals in the present era do not look kindly on the military, if it is not formally a revolutionary military. Another factor was the rise of the Third-World revolutions, and the sometimes fortuitous association of these revolutions with the enemies of Israel. The Arab world was scarcely revolutionary, but Algeria, whose struggle against French colonialism had been turned by French intellectuals into a paradigm of Third-World revolution, spoke Arabic; the Arabs became allied with elements of black Africa; and, through an odd chain of circumstances, Israel became the perceived enemy of revolutionary intellectuals, black as well as white. The victory of Israel over the Arabs in 1967 put the finishing touches on this development.

There were other factors in the decline of philo-Semitism among intellectuals. After World War II, not only America but capitalism gained new credibility and support among intellectuals. It was capitalism after all that was producing a high standard of living in America and Western Europe, and it was under capitalism that a high degree of personal liberty seemed to obtain, in contrast to the situation under socialism in Russia and Eastern Europe, which provided neither freedom nor a high standard of living. Now Jews, despite their prominence among the intellectuals criticizing capitalism, seem to flourish as a group under capitalism. For businessmen and free professionals (and for intellectuals, I would add) it could scarcely be otherwise. Thus when capitalism got into trouble with the intellectuals once again, as it did in the 1960's with the surprising recrudescence of Marxist and other radical doc-

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trines and with the even more surprising turn by many intellectuals toward the support of authoritarian regimes, Jews quite naturally turned up once again as a backward element and an obstacle to progress.

There is a third aspect of the declining philo-Semitism of intellectuals, and this is the declining credit of religion in the modern world. A religious revival took place after World War II. Religious thinkers, old and new, were held in high repute by intellectuals. No matter that these were largely Protestant thinkers; their prestige spilled over to Jews as well. Today religion has credit only to the extent that it becomes political or "relevant" and participates in current struggles, and whatever the efforts of various groups of Jews to insist on the social role of Judaism, the fact is that if Judaism is to be taken seriously because it works for social justice, it will not be taken seriously at all. Judaism has to some degree, and individual Jews have to a much greater degree, worked for universal social justice, but this is not the distinguishing mark of Judaism —a religion whose true strength and authority lie rather in its unbending monotheism, its historical depth and weight, its focus on a single people in all its concrete reality.

Finally there is the fact that Jews have depended on liberal values for their security and their prosperity, and never have liberal values been in worse shape among the intellectuals. Interestingly enough, even the one liberal value that has defined the main thrust of Jewish defense organizations over the years—tolerance—has come under severe attack from such leading intellectuals as Herbert Marcuse, Barrington Moore, and Robert Paul Wolff. Nor is the attack confined to them, as one can see (to take a random example) from the catechism entitled "Answers to Liberal Questions on Campus Uprising" circulated by the New University Conference and published last spring in the *Guardian*. Now both the *Guardian* and the NUC may be considered relatively moderate representatives of the New Left: they are not Weathermen. Yet this catechism explains why it is unnecessary to respect the rights of minorities of students who want to attend classes during strikes or to enlist in ROTC, and it also defends the kinds of violence that are used to support this refusal of tolerance. If liberal values, and particularly the value of tolerance, decline, Jews are in trouble; if arguments are made for violence and violence is encouraged, Jews are in trouble. Perhaps not immediately—so many Jews after all are engaged in the attack on tolerance and the encouragement of violence. But soon enough. More than most people, Jews need a civil society, one in which rules exist and are enforced, because they are a small minority whose very security is based on rules of civilized intercourse. When these go, Jews will suffer.

IV

I HAVE argued that if we look at intellectuals, we will see less understanding of and support for Jews and Jewish interests than we have had from that quarter in many years. At the same time, I have argued that the role intellectuals have played in this country in recent years is likely to arouse a nasty opposition which —since so many intellectuals are Jews—may spread to Jews as such. These two arguments apparently come down to saying that if, on the one hand, intellectuals maintain their prominence and power, and hold to their present intellectual stance, Jews will suffer; while on the other hand, if they decline in power and influence, Jews will suffer. Is there no contradiction here?

No, there is none. First, groups can act against their own interests. Second, the fact is that while intellectuals are in large measure Jews, Jews are not in large measure intellectuals. What is good for intellectuals may not be good for Jews, so that intellectuals may maintain prominence and power while Jews and Jewish interests suffer. But aside from this purely formal point, we have to contend, as always in discussing any minority group, with the sticky phenomenon known as "self-hatred."

Up to now I have spoken as if the only reasons for the declining philo-Semitism of the intellectuals have been certain developments in the world which place the interests of Jews in opposition to those of groups now favored by intellectuals—revolutionaries of every stripe, both in the Third World and in the United States. But in all truth the matter is not so simple. There is a peculiar bite to the enthusiasm with which intellectuals—and Jewish intellectuals—have taken up these causes. For the anti-Jewish tendencies of Jewish intellectuals cannot be understood merely in terms of concrete interests which they have chosen to espouse. They have also chosen to put down certain things. The virulence of the New-Left attack on "Zionism" around the world cannot to my mind be explained on the basis of a belief that in the conflict between Jews and Arabs, the Jews are wrong and the Arabs are right. It is also explained by the fact that the Jews stand for something—and not only to intellectuals in general, but to Jewish intellectuals, perhaps, in particular. They stand for rationality; they stand for a society of mixed and limited goods; they stand for individual responsibility; they stand for ambiguity and irony; they stand for the virtue of attachment to a concrete people as well as attachment to abstract universal principles; they stand for the modification of the ideal by the real. It is interesting to me that when intellectuals were attracted to the qualities of ambiguity and irony (let us take, as a symbolic example, the work of Joyce, and recall that a Jew stands at the heart of his major novel),

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they understood and were sympathetic to the Jewish position. As they turn more and more to a world-view in which there is no nuance, but only black and white, a world in which even Soviet Russia seems too acquiescent in its relations to a complex reality and only Mao and Castro and Che in their resistance (or apparent resistance) to such reality satisfy—at such a time the Jews are not in favor. And for the Jewish intellectual, there is the additional element of fighting these hated values of moderation and tolerance as he has experienced them first-hand, up close, and often in himself.

Self-hatred can mean and has meant many things. In the past, when one spoke of self-hatred among Jews, one usually was referring to the embarrassment of being associated with a low-status, pariah people. Individual Jews tried to free themselves from this association by turning against the Jewish group, Jewish practices, Jewish mores—by "passing," sometimes becoming more anti-Semitic than non-Jewish anti-Semites. This is the classic Jewish self-hatred. Today, when Jewish status has risen, when Jews are no longer generally seen as outcasts from a Christian society (in part because the society itself is no longer so thoroughly Christian), we encounter a new form of self-hatred—a hatred of what Jews have become, the qualities they have come to stand for: rationality, moderation, balance, tolerance. All these qualities are now attacked in their own right, but even more, I am convinced —though it would be hard to prove—they are attacked by Jews because they are also Jewish values which hamper anyone raised in them from becoming as completely committed to the values of irrationality, intolerance, and extremism as many Jewish intellectuals would now like.

But if one element in the present mood of intellectuals is a forcible unlearning of liberal values, and if the victims of this process are Jews and Jewish interests, should not those of us concerned with Jewish interests favor the counter-attack on the intellectuals that I have suggested is altogether likely as a result of the role they have played in connection with the Vietnam war and the change in American moral standards? The answer is no, if only because this counter-attack too will be marked by intolerance and violence. Jewish interests can no more be served by the extremism of the Right than they can be served by the extremism of the Left which so many intellectuals favor today.

Jewish interests are clearly tied up with the fate of liberalism, of tolerance, of nonviolence. This is certainly the case in the United States; it is the case in other countries where Jews live; and despite the permanent war in the Middle East, it is even the case there. It is a liberal, open society that makes it possible for the American Jewish population to raise money for Israel, and to influence the government in support of Israel's right to exist. More liberal policies in the Soviet Union would undoubtedly serve to limit the ominous attachment of the Russians to the cause of arming the Arab states, and would make possible increased Jewish emigration from that country. Israel itself, despite the need to maintain powerful and terribly costly armed forces, observes the values of a liberal society within its own borders, and will, one hopes, be pushed by its loyalty to these very values toward new approaches to peace.

The aim of those of us within the intellectual community who are committed to liberal values and to Jewish interests as well must be to persuade our fellow intellectuals to give up their attachment to the enemies of those values on the Left while also guarding against the counter-attack from the Right. It will not be easy to maintain such a complex stance, but it is the only one that can serve the interests of an open society, of Jews, and—I also believe—of intellectuals themselves as well.

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The Future of the University

Robert Nisbet

NO ONE SURVEYING the academic scene today can conclude other than that the American university is in an exceedingly precarious position. The luster of even the most historic and distinguished of universities is fading. For the first time in the history of this country there is valid reason for wondering whether the university will survive. Alarmism may be the refuge of the timid, but any optimism at this time regarding the future of the university in this country would be little more than euphoria. The blunt and inescapable fact is, the university in America is in the most critical condition of its history.

All too plainly the university has become the object of contempt for many, including students, and of apprehension for others, including widening sectors of the public, nearly all of whom once regarded it in much the way the Church was regarded during the Middle Ages.

Already, indeed, the image of a Harvard that could rally the most powerful of its alumni before the threatened entry by a Senator Joseph McCarthy appears to be a tarnished image. The same is true of Yale, of Berkeley, of Wisconsin, of, quite literally, every major university in America at the present time. One has the sense of a constantly widening indifference, at best, to the university in the minds of Americans. I believe no people has ever lived that has had more pride in the idea of college and university, however naively expressed at times, than the American people. For how many families has the university or college not been the very essence of Americans' dreams for their children? What pride was once taken in both admission and in graduation. The commencement ceremony had begun to assume almost ecclesiastical overtones, much like those of religious festivals in medieval Europe. Communities competed with each other for the privilege of being host to some new university or college or branch of an established university. Would anyone suggest that any, or much, of this is the case today?

In these circumstances, the most serious mistake that any partisan of the university can make is to assume that "our affluent, technological, post-industrial society cannot possibly do without the university." This is both absurd and complacent. Of course contemporary society can do without the university. What it cannot do without is *knowledge*: its ever-continuing discovery and its constant diffusion to new generations. But to assume that only the university is qualified to perform this mission is as preposterous as it would have been for any 16th-century guildsman to assume that only through the craft guild could the production of goods be continued. Other ways were then found. And other ways will be found—are already being found—to meet the research and teaching requirements of knowledge in our technological society.

The essence of our problem lies in what might be called the degradation of the academic dogma—the dogma according to which scholarship and teaching are ends in themselves apart from any extrinsic purposes they might be thought to serve. Were it not for this degradation there would be little cause for apprehension at the present time. The university has been under assaults from the outside at other times in its history. Generally these had their origins in politically conservative sectors of society, in American business, and in the more fundamentalist parts of American religion.

The university was under attack during the Depression 30's, again for the most part from the Right and with the added spur of widespread economic misery. But the power of these attacks notwithstanding, the university then had a solid and tough core of resistance: one formed by faculty members, administrators, students, and others who knew what the purpose of a university was, what it could rightly do, and what it would risk its very soul by doing.

I have no desire to idealize that university and that academic community when I say there was the general, if usually unstated, awareness by faculty of the privileged position of the university in American society. It was understood that the price of being able to engage in dispassionate scholarship and in rigorous, honest teaching was

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a fairly high one: this price was keeping the university as far as possible out of politics, out of economic enterprise, and, generally, out of the areas of society where partisan strivings are endemic, where Mammon rules, and where passionate moralism is of the essence. There was awareness among academic persons of the inherent fragility of any community that is founded upon that most recent, and even yet rare, of Western virtues: dispassionate reason.

A kind of social contract existed. For its part the American social order gave financial support and loyalty to an institution that must have seemed frequently aristocratic, sometimes arrogant, and always somewhat medieval in structure —an enclave of intellectual privilege in mass democratic society. And the university, as its end of the contract, provided for youth, during its most difficult stage, adolescence—at least for that part of youth able and willing to enroll in universities—a community founded solely upon reason and the pursuit of knowledge, and a structure of authority that proceeded from learning and acquired wisdom.

I stress my description of the university's part of the social contract. So many faculty members and university presidents have by now trumpeted the university's role in the "knowledge industry" that it is necessary to point out that this was at no time accepted as the chief function of the university. Teaching and scholarship, yes, but these acquired their luster from the unique community and authority that was built around them for the edification of adolescent youth.

It was the university, not society, that broke the contract. It broke it during the period just following World War II when a veritable Reformation occurred on the American campus—complete with economic, political, social, and intellectual changes. Paul Goodman speaks of the New Reformation. I should prefer to speak here, with all appreciation to Mr. Goodman, of the Last Reformation. For under the eye of the historian it is possible to see contemporary ravages of the university as the last in a string of Reformations that began in the Church in the 16th century and that, in due time, came to include guild, manor, landed aristocracy—and, of course, the knighthood. Knights too once belonged to guilds, their function, combat, just as scholars belonged to guilds whose function was teaching and study in the learned disciplines. Is there anything unbelievable in the thought of the university professor in the 20th century coming to resemble, and quite soon, the figure that Cervantes immortalized in Don Quixote? I think not.

WHEREIN DOES our Last Reformation consist? Substantially in the same elements to be found in all the earlier Reformations in Europe: economic, social, intellectual, and political elements. There was, to begin with, the post-World War II efflorescence of the Higher Capitalism on the American campus in which overnight faculty members became entrepreneurs of research lavishly funded by government and foundation. The "project" rather than the academic course, the institute rather than the classroom, became the principal identifying attributes of this new breed. I refer to the altered conception of the university whereby it became a kind of adjunct government to Washington and Geneva, with consultantships, not scholarly books, the mark of the successful Man of Power. I refer to the assumption by the university of the role of Super-Humanitarian, ready—nay, eager—to meet *directly* all of society's problems; or at least those that had sufficiently strong interest groups representing them. I refer to the Cult of Individuality and its consecration of the individual academic "star" rather than the community of reason and learning. I refer to the university's sought-out role of Benign Therapist, using either a bastard version of the liberal arts or, in due time, sensitivity and encounter sessions to bind up middle-class youth's identity-scars. And I refer, finally, to the fantastic increase in the whole level of internal politicization of universities, with results so often resembling a Byzantine bureaucracy grafted onto Jacobin democracy.

All of these new functions—each of them no doubt noble—had their enthusiastic supporters among faculty, administrators, and trustees. One would have to go back to the pre-Reformation Church in Western Europe for so good an example of a dogma-based community corrupted by wealth, by power, and by Faustian ambitions. Being noble, why could not the university be great? Being great, why not wealthy, powerful, its communicants citizens of the world? Why could the university not be, at one and the same time, philosopher-king, philosopher-Croesus, philosopher-soldier, philosopher-statesman, philosopher-healer, philosopher-humanitarian, even philosopher-revolutionary? So might a corporate Faust have dreamed.

The student-faculty insurrections of the 1960's did not break down academic authority and fragment academic community. *It was the prior breakdown of authority and the fragmentation of community that caused the student-faculty insurrections.* What was for a long time fatuously called the "democratization" of the university was in fact the destruction of the academic community, its dogma, and the structure of authority that rose directly from curriculum and scholarship. A vacuum was created, and the several powers and tyrannies of the student-faculty revolts moved into this vacuum. It has always been this way in history. The revolution in France at the end of the 18th century, in Russia in 1917, and in Germany in 1932 give profound testimony to this fact. In retrospect it is possible to see that even had Vietnam and black civil rights not provided

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justifications, there would have been insurections in the 1960's anyhow. The vacuum of authority and the desolation of community would have seen to that.

Recent turbulence notwithstanding, the lamps of the university in America continue to glow. If they didn't, there would be little use in even speculating about the future of the academic community. The luster under which a Harvard or Princeton or Columbia, a Berkeley, Michigan, or Wisconsin, has lived for so many decades, even centuries, is not easily and quickly darkened. Assessed in terms of the number of "light and leading" at these places, and many others, along with the continuing appeal of the university in the minds of parents, the prestige of the university even today, after a decade of strife and storm, is great. Thus it would be a mistake to underestimate the *possibility* of the university's capacity to survive. Not all of the academic community is dissolved. Not all of the American public have become disgusted with the university. Most, I would judge, are more confused and bewildered than disgusted.

If a determining number of persons—chiefly the faculty in the university—will take the mighty step of seeking to arrest present processes of degradation and to form a fresh community of academic purpose, a freshly affirmed academic dogma, there is no reason to suppose that disaster is—as it now would appear to be—inevitable.

II

WHAT VITALIZING function, then, can be seen for the university that is alone capable, given its special character, of restoring academic authority and rebuilding academic community?

Keystone of the research establishment? But there are other organizations better qualified for this, given the technical requirements of large-scale research today. Adjunct government? But government has its own special demands and requires its own distinctive roles, both of which appear ill-suited to academic aptitudes. Radical critic or conscience of society? But societies do not generally support, with tenure, their radical critics; and anyhow there are more fertile contexts for the Gracchi, Robespierres, Benthams, Marxes, and Lenins of history. Supreme humanitarian, responsible for all of society's political, economic, and psychological ills and deprivations? The university is no more qualified, basically, for this than is either the church or the labor union. Therapeutic community designed to heal identity-crises in middle-class youth? But even to the extent that this function may now be said to exist more or less successfully, it does so only in the reflected glow of the university believed to be a genuine intellectual community. Microcosm of culture, of the creative arts? To some extent, without doubt, but any thought of the university's cloistered community being seedbed for the Shakespeares, Mozarts, and Picassos of history, of providing necessary incentives, flies in the face of all that we know about the nourishing contexts of the arts in society.

I do not say that the university must rigorously eschew each or even all of these; that is, totally. No great institution is ever cabin'd, cribb'd, and confin'd to but a single, narrowly conceived purpose or function. But no institution can remain either great or long in existence unless, giving structure to all its secondary or ancillary functions, there is some one, distinctive, and clearly perceived function; some purpose or meaning that casts its light over the social order. Whatever it is, if it is to have any semblance of realism and possibility of fulfillment, it must be one that has substantial relation to the trained capacities of those who work, live, and die in the university. Trained *in*capacities are an all too frequent occurrence in the history of culture; nowhere more evident than within institutions facing breakdown or *stasis*.

I suggest that the university's most feasible function for the future is in essence what it has been in the past: that of serving as a setting for the scholarly and scientific imagination. No doubt such a conception will seem archaic, off the main line of history, even reactionary to many. But quite apart from the demonstrable (as I believe) unfeasibility of the other conceptions I have mentioned, why should the conception of the university as setting for ideas, as setting for both the discovery and the teaching of knowledge in the learned disciplines and professions seem any more archaic today than it did three or four decades ago—at, say, Chicago, Berkeley, Harvard, Columbia, or Caltech during any one of the great periods each of these and many other universities have known?

What, in a *civilized* society, could possibly be wrong, or seem stagnant, or archaic, or antiquarian, about the vision of an enclave in the social order the principal purpose of which is working *creatively and critically with ideas through scholarship and teaching*? Is not man's highest evolutionary trait thus far precisely his capacity for dealing with ideas: learnedly, imaginatively, and critically? Is there any more promising hallmark for a civilized society than its willingness to support a class of persons whose principal business it is to think, to arrive at knowledge, and to induct others in this principal business?

Making exception only for the occasional periods of torpor, of desuetude in the university's long history, periods when its just reward was witnessing the greatest minds of society doing their work outside the university's walls—this is precisely what the university has been about. The university is no monastery or retreat. And its business is the business of human life: *intellectual* business. But only as filtered and interpreted by

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the minds of those best qualified to distinguish the major from the minor, the important from the trivial, the relatively lasting from the manifestly transitory. It does not seem to me to matter very much what the intellectual content of a curriculum or course be so long as it is a subject clearly evocative to good minds and one on which a sufficient body of knowledge or informed understanding exists to provide the basis of intellectual discourse, of intellectual community. Much harm to the university has been done in times past by those who have tried to make the classics, say, or "liberal arts" or "general education" or perhaps some imagined need of the human personality the exclusive or chief subject of the university.

When Macaulay, no lover himself of the classical curriculum, was asked once why he nevertheless drew his recruits for the civil service from the classics at Oxford and Cambridge, he replied: "Because that is where the best students are. If instead of the classics astrology were the preferred subject I shouldn't mind. I would then seek out those students most proficient at casting nativities." Many crimes have been committed in the name of the classics and the liberal arts. Much of the present widening indifference of students to the university, especially in the nonprofessional areas, stems directly from subjects too long ritualized, their natural juices gone, their existence dependent almost wholly on curricular requirement.

This, however, is not the place to decide what subjects shall be the essential ones in the university. How, in any event, *could* one so decide: that is, abstractly? Subjects, courses, and curricula have changed frequently and diversely during the university's eight centuries of history. They have been and always should be resultants of what is going on in the whole area of creative scholarship, in the largest area of all, that of human culture.

Our concern here is none of these. It is the *mission* of the university, the *role* of the academic community in contemporary society. It is this, not the intellectual content, really, of the university, that is the source of the conflict presently threatening to destroy the structure of the university in America. Why must the proposal of an intellectual community, of a scene of ideas given structure by teaching and scholarship, be apologized for? Is it the radical function that is desired? But nothing is more radical than an idea. Is it the humanitarian function? Nothing in the long run is more humanitarian than a humane and moral idea. Is it citizenship? But no one can be a citizen simply by sedulously learning to be a citizen. The university's relation to government, research, the arts, and other great functions should be close. It always has been close in the university's brighter moments in history.

But close in ways that are germane to the university. There is something inherently aristocratic and guild-like about the university. And this has been as true of the great universities in times of creative ferment, right down to the Chicagos, Berkeleys, Harvards, and Michigans of the present century as it has of lesser universities in dull times. No genuinely intellectual community can possibly exist save in terms of an aristocracy that consists, basically, of no more than respect for the best ideas and the best scholars and teachers, and the proper ranking of these with respect to those ideas, teachers, and scholars of lesser worth—*as this worth is demonstrated within the academic community.* No more can any genuinely intellectual community survive without a system of authority, a system made legitimate by its clearly perceived relation to the function or purpose around which community and aristocracy alike are built.

Admittedly there is a degree of aristocracy that becomes mere privilege-claiming arrogance. And we should be blind if we did not observe the degree to which the academic community in America has, in recent times, manifested such arrogance. So too is there a degree of guild-like authority, of emphasis upon structure and dominant purpose, that can only too quickly lead to a kind of complacent torpor of mind. All of this is true. But are we nevertheless to apologize for the idea of an intellectual aristocracy, one mindful of obligations as well as rights and privileges? I profoundly hope not. The highest goal of human culture is not obliteration of aristocracy: it is, so far as we can manage it, the basing of aristocracy on the levels of genuine intellectual and moral quality. Nor is there anything intrinsically wrong with the idea of either guild or community when we are thinking of contexts for the arts, letters, and sciences. Despite a romantic myth to the contrary, a great deal of the world's most creative work—even in the spheres of music, painting, and literature—has been done in guilds and communities, however loose in structure some of these may have been.

III

Let us assume that the ideal of a community of ideas, undergirded by the primary functions of teaching and scholarship, is a worthy one for the university; not merely worthy but probably the only feasible one, all things considered. What, then, must be done to reestablish this academic community, to make it once again as evocative and creative as we know it to have been at other times in its long history? I suggest the following as being the prime requirements at the present time. They are requirements that confront the public, legislatures and government officials, boards of trustees, and students. But above any other single group in society it is the faculties of the universities that hold commanding position in the acceptance and then the implementation of these requirements. And among university faculties the crucial ones, clear-

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ly, are those in our most distinguished, our oldest and most prestige-laden universities. One must not underestimate the kind of influence that radiates from a Berkeley, Harvard, Columbia, Michigan, or Yale. As they go, so goes the academic nation.

What are the most fundamental requirements of the academic community and its rehabilitation in American life? I shall list them in the approximate order of their importance, or at least priority:

1) *Repudiation of historicism.* This is vital, for already the air is full of proposals for the university each of which is said to be rooted in the "clearly developing character of the contemporary university." No mistake, however, can be greater than basing either proposal or analysis upon some imagined trajectory of development, upon what Sir Karl Popper has called historicism. Particularly pertinent here is prophylaxis against historicism regarding the university's role in politics, large-scale research, and humanitarianism. Each of these has behind it large numbers of advocates. For them it is not enough that a certain proposal be desired or advocated. It must additionally be declared "inevitable" or "inexorable," the consequence of its being pulled by the locomotive of history down a single track bed. Failure to hook on to the locomotive of history results, it is said, in being condemned to archaism, in being reactionary or nostalgic. How many follies and knaveries in history have been committed by those in supposed possession of the "track of history" it would be impossible to guess. But the number is large. The first and indispensable step, then, in reform of the university is abandonment of historicism. The sole objective of planning should be simply the highest possible combination of the desirable and the feasible.

2) *The restoration of authority.* Nothing else can be achieved until the university is able to create again a system of recognized authority such as it had down until a decade or two ago.

The first step in this rehabilitation of legitimate authority lies in endowing the formal administration of the campus with the priority and freedom from incessant veto powers by faculty and students that formal administration in the American university once had. Not least among the degradations of the academic scene in America during the past quarter of a century has been the degradation of, first, department chairman, then dean, then president. For a long time this degradation of role and authority was rationalized in terms of faculty participation in the university's system of authority. And one grants immediately, a good university is simply inconceivable apart from a substantial measure of the university's reliance upon faculty judgment in those areas—curriculum, academic policy, above all, appointments and promotions of faculty, along with admissions of, and degrees and certificates granted to, students—where it is uniquely informed and therefore vital.

But by the same token no great university has ever been achieved in this country without the leadership that flowed from relatively strong administrators, particularly presidents. It is not merely that Harvard, Berkeley, Chicago, Cornell, and other universities *became* distinguished under the leadership of strong presidents such as Eliot, Wheeler, Harper, and White; it is the further fact that they managed to *remain* great for long periods only as the result in very large degree of this leadership. And, as the veriest novice in the study of administration knows, no administration can become effective over a long period of time if its every act is under the *de facto*, if not *de jure*, veto power of faculty committees whose insights are inevitably surer in matters of consultation and leisured advice, than in matters of direct administration.

This is the first necessity: the restoration of the authority of the president of the university, and of the provosts, deans, and department chairmen, in whose hands responsibility is placed for the governance of the university. This carries with it, of course, the corollary that boards of trustees and—as in public institutions—political figures in legislative and executive offices of government will be obliged to give firm backing to university officials. As matters now stand, the university president is as often rendered impotent by failure of key public, or trustee, figures to back him in time of crisis as by failure of faculty.

THERE WILL BE nothing easy in this restoration of authority to presidents and deans. On a score of grounds it will be attacked as an invasion of faculty and student democracy. But apart from such restoration I do not see how the university can do what it is supposed to do academically or how it can hope for the rather privileged enclave-like status that is the real structure of its freedom in society.

The faculty have the most to learn here. Few things have done more in recent years to undermine the authority of the university than the wanton spreading of the view that the faculty, *qua* faculty, must concern itself with each and every aspect of administrative life on the campus. It has led men and women whose sole claim to distinction is as teachers and scholars into areas of governance and responsibility for which they are largely unfitted by temperament and by principal interest. The revolt in the 1960's of students against administration had, as its immediate prelude, the subtle but nonetheless puissant revolt of the faculty against the administration, a revolt characterized by spreading, deepening faculty insistence that *all* spheres of the university—student discipline, management of residence halls, and the scores of other spheres that exist, that are bound to exist on a university campus in our century—must

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be brought continuously under faculty scrutiny and direction.

No good university can conceivably exist unless the *de facto* authority of the faculty is great in matters of appointment and promotion of colleagues, in admissions, in the granting of degrees, and in curricular matters. These, after all, are the sovereign elements of the academic community. But there is, on the evidence of the history of the university, a price that must be paid for the faculty's dominance in these crucial areas. And that price is forbearance from insistence upon dominance in each of the multitude of other, secondary, ancillary areas of the university.

One cannot devote himself effectively to teaching and scholarship if he must be forever sniffing out possible derelictions of those whose job it is to supervise plant and facilities, the social and moral behavior of students, athletics, or relationships with trustees and alumni. If the professor's authority in study or classroom is to remain great, he can hardly subject it to the inevitable follies and errors that must attend efforts to make this authority equally great in the nonacademic areas of the university.

A great deal of nonsense is being spoken these days about the students' right to participate in the government of the university. One even finds spokesmen for the view that students should sit on governing boards, highest faculty councils, the committees concerned with appointment and promotion of faculty, the approval of courses, and so on. All this for a class that by its very nature is transitory in the university: four or five years at most for any given student and the ever-present possibility of dismissal for demonstrated ignorance and incompetence. That students have a collective right to have their scholarly interests treated seriously; a right to make their views known to faculty and administration; a right to be spared the childhood-perpetuating restrictions and indignities that used to be heaped upon them in the name of *in loco parentis*; a right to speak out (even if not a divine right to be listened to incessantly); a right to participate as they see fit in political and other activities outside the university, subject as adults to the laws of civil society and in recognition that the university cannot also be their sanctuary—all of this I take to be so valid as to be scarcely worth the emphasis here. Above all, from the point of view of the practical reinforcement of the faculty's teaching responsibilities, students have the right—I would say duty—to evaluate and assess as best they can, as effectively, even loudly, as they can, the quality of the teaching they are getting. I shall say more about this below.

But it is preposterous to suppose that students, none of them likely to be present on the campus for more than four or five years at most, their responsibility for the campus accordingly diminished, should participate at high and crucial levels in the formal government of the university—either within administrative or within faculty councils. Any effort so to suppose can only result in persuading students that what they are clearly *not* qualified to assess—levels of knowledge in a field, scholarly stature of professors, relation of courses to the state of knowledge, among other spheres—is less important than what they *are* qualified to assess.

THE VITAL POINT, though, is restoration of authority. Without such restoration of authority in the university there is no possibility of present encroachments upon the autonomy of the university being arrested: encroachments by legislature, governor, federal agency, and by police. And these encroachments are becoming as plain in the private universities today as in the public. Last year 32 states passed laws aimed directly at academic turbulence. The chief consequence of breakdown of authority within an institution is invariably the rise of power—whether from within or without. If members of the university faculty are unwilling to make a major distinction between the (admittedly fallible) authority of president, dean, or department chairman on the one hand and, on the other, the power of the police, they are sure to get ever greater amounts of the latter.

3) *A clearing of the scene.* I do not see how authority, scholarship, teaching, or any other vital aspect of the university can be long maintained without a substantial number of present structures and activities on the American campus being removed within the next ten years. On a rough guess I should think at least 75 per cent of all existing institutes, centers, and bureaus in the academic sphere of the university should be phased out.

It is not research, large or small, that I am concerned with seeing phased out of the university. Research, along with teaching, is what universities are all about. But *research in conjunction with teaching*, and of a scale that does not constantly threaten to dwarf the rest of the university! I am well aware that there is much research today that simply cannot be done except in vast, highly organized, bureaucratized centers. Very good. But let such research be done where it can be done more efficiently and without damage to academic community. And let those whose passions are directed toward this kind of research be free to move from the university. Make no mistake. A substantial number will choose to move, including some of highest luster.

Make no mistake either about the powerful resistance that will be mobilized immediately against this clearing of the scene: by trustees, faculty, and graduate students, among others, not to mention those in the great foundations, major departments of government, and others whose vast funds have made the jungle of institutes possible.

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The cries of status-pain, of income-pain, of power-pain, will be awful to have to listen to. It is inconceivable to me that the work of clearing the scene of the thick overgrowth of institutes and centers, along with the many other forms of organized distraction from teaching and of organized depredation upon the academic community, could be done by any one university alone. My guess is that, given the very deep roots and very wide spread these organizations and activities have at the present time, only concerted action by the top twenty or thirty universities in the country would bear substantial result. If this be conspiracy. . . .

4) *The depoliticization of the university.* The university is today suffused by politics; this includes the private as well as the public university. I use the word "politics" in every significant sense that word could have for the university. The number of laws and administrative regulations affecting university operation that stem from federal and state governments is at an all-time high. This is the consequence of, first, the Higher Capitalism in the university, involving the multitude of financial relations with agencies of government, and, most recently, of the apprehension created in the public mind by the turbulence of the 1960's. There is no need to emphasize the degree to which the campus has become a microcosm of the national and international scene in the number and intensity of ideological issues it has assimilated during the past two decades. And, finally, no one can miss the extent to which "participatory democracy" in university affairs has not only sapped the foundations of any coherent system of authority, but also created a setting of instant and chronic politics that makes serious teaching and study all but impossible.

Is a depoliticization of the university possible? One can hope and try, but it is very hard to believe that it is. Once politicization becomes deeply ingrained, once federal and state governments are in the habit of penetrating any cultural or social sanctuary, once members of an organization begin to define their very constitutional status as citizens in terms of incessant political activism, and once the normal hierarchy of the academic community has been seriously weakened by spreading habits of participatory democracy, first among faculty, then among students, with all offices under a kind of standing suspicion, all decisions subject to threat of veto action, the likelihood of arresting these tendencies is not very great. There is much in history to give substance to that conclusion. But of the importance of depoliticization there can be no question.

5) *The elevation of the function of teaching.* The function of teaching was degraded when, following World War II, the function of project- or grant- or institute-based research became the only genuinely valued function; when it became possible to win renown, high salary, and power in the university without more than token appearance in classroom and seminar. Of what avail is it today to remind young instructors solemnly of their "teaching obligations"; of what use is it for students to assess faculty performance; and of what incentive to offer annual teaching awards (usually thought of as consolation prizes for failures elsewhere on the campus) when the evidence is clear that through research alone—or through the consultantships and institute-memberships that stamp one a man of power on the campus—are reputation and affluence made?

How do we elevate the function of teaching? First, forget all the annual awards and citations; forget the solemn injunctions by faculty committee and administration to be a good teacher. Above all, forget the ghastly expedient of establishing special schools or centers or professorships through which, it is said sanctimoniously and fatuously, "teaching, not research, will be the function." The good minds—faculty and students alike—will avoid such expedients as the plague they in fact are.

Second, discontinue the appalling practice, now to be seen from Harvard to Berkeley, of *rewarding intellectual merit through exemption from the requirement of a full load of teaching.* The stupidity of the present condition lies in the fact that all the while we issue pious injunctions to teach, we use the device of *exemption* from teaching as the prime means of honoring the Nobel Prize winner, the National Academy baron, the research-capitalist who has just taken the Ford Foundation for a million, the man of power who travels weekly or daily to State or Pentagon, and elsewhere. We make these nabobs directors of institutes and centers, and while I am not suggesting that they invariably eschew teaching, they stand as monuments to the clear fact that distinction lies where full and mandatory teaching do not.

Third, drop the absurd "research" from the titles of those who now live under its talismanic charm and make evident from Harvard and Columbia to Berkeley and Stanford that everybody henceforth teaches a full load, which I would myself define properly as two courses every term in the laboratory sciences and three in all other fields. Is this drastic requirement to include National Academy stars and Ford Foundation capitalists on the campus? Institute directors as well as mere professors? Professors as well as novice assistant professors? Very much so. In fact, especially so.

I am not suggesting for a moment that such action would automatically make great teachers of all who are forced to go regularly to class. What system possibly could? I am suggesting only that it is bound to raise the *value* of teaching. It will also help if we reduce substantially the present inflated and exploited system of leaves of absence, of

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which seventh-year sabbaticals are but one tiny, exposed portion of the iceberg. As a modest start I would suggest that no one, not even the most valued adviser of Presidents and Congressional Committees, not even the Isaac Newton University Distinguished Service Research Professor of Physical Science and Director of the Faraday Institute for the Advancement of Theoretical Physics be permitted academic leave oftener than one term every five years.

As I say, there is no way known to man in which a merely ordinary teacher can be made into a great one. And the worst of all denizens of the academic scene are those pathetic souls who call themselves "teachers" simply because they show little sign of being able to write anything above the level of a political manifesto. But if the steps I have suggested above are followed—and they are easy ones, really, even though the howls of outrage and threats to resign will be awful to have to listen to for a few months—I think we will all be surprised by how relatively easy it is to restore teaching on the American campus to at least the level it had prior to World War II.

6) *A finite conception of the university.* This may well be the most difficult of all the requirements to meet, for it is evident enough that what has somehow developed in the American mind, academic and nonacademic, is a nearly Faustian view of the university and its potential benefactors. It is difficult to see how academic policy can operate any more effectively than foreign policy without some constraining sense of limits. The kind of transcendent moralism that democracy has tended from the beginning to invest in our view of political government and of the role of political democracy in the world is to be found in full glory today in the university and in popular assessments of the university.

It is no more possible for the university to serve all individual needs and tastes than it is possible for it to serve all social, economic, and political needs in society. The sound democratic conviction that all persons should have reasonably equal access to the university has unfortunately become converted in recent decades to the dangerous—because of the inherent impossibility of ever fulfilling it—conviction that the university must be incessantly reshaped *to meet all possible interests and needs.* So long as these are genuinely intellectual and academic interests and needs, no great problem is created. The progress of the university has consisted exactly in the changes and adaptations of curriculum necessary to meeting them.

It is clearly a different matter, however, when to the intellectual-academic function of the university there is added a set of other functions ranging from the spiritual and moral to the psychological and the social. A great deal of what I earlier referred to as the university's role of Benign Therapist is a direct response to entrance in ever widening numbers of students who have little if any interest in the university as a setting for study in the learned disciplines but who must be—or so the familiar argument runs—given incentive, be made interested, be provided with something deemed relevant, be, at all costs, entertained.

It is the unhappy fate of the once-honored liberal arts to have become the repository for most of these students, and I can think of nothing that has so hastened the degradation of this sector of the university than the heavy pastoral responsibilities that have been dumped on the liberal arts by the Faustian conception of the university. Today, as is all too evident, even the standard areas of the liberal arts prove insufficient. Hence the turning by desperate administrations and faculties to still more accessible, still more "relevant" types of course and curriculum. Hence the vogue of quasi-therapeutic sensitivity and encounter classes, of courses built around direct intuition or feeling in which all members of the academic community are indeed equal. And as these last become, as they show clear signs of becoming already, contexts of fresh boredom, fresh demand for novel diversion and "relevance," it is anyone's guess what the university will next turn to for purposes of pacification.

I am not suggesting that the problem of the university lies foremost in the admitting today of the mentally unqualified, the intellectually inferior. Far from it. I am inclined to think, in fact, that the problem lies more often in the admission, through false pretenses by the university, of those who are in a certain sense too bright, too *gifted,* too filled by intellectual passion already reached, for the inherently limited capacities of any curriculum to satisfy.

Even during its brightest and most creative moments the university, by its rather communal and corporate nature, has never been the home of all the light and leading in the West. Can one easily imagine a Buddha, Moses, or Jesus, an Aeschylus, Chaucer, or Shakespeare, a Bach, Mozart, or Beethoven being improved by enforced, or falsely motivated, residence in a curricular setting with all its requirements and layers of prerequisites? Nor am I suggesting that genius is some purely internal or genetic thing, without need of contexts. I am suggesting that the university is by no means the proper context for any and all forms of intellectual endowment.

In exactly the same way that the university is not, on the evidence, the best setting for the creative writer, musician, and artist, so perhaps is it not the best setting for the maturation of a few other, equally important, if not as vivid, types of mind and personality in society. It was not from lack of mental endowment that a Marco Polo would have been ill-placed in one of the universities of his day—or, later, anyone of the *philosophes,* or a Bentham, or a Marx. Each

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one of these might conceivably have improved the university he went to, but it is exceedingly unlikely that the university could have added a cubit to the stature of any of them.

Is the possibility not equally great in the fields of business and the practical arts generally that the university, far from being vital to personal success, is more often an organized, socially-sanctioned means of *deferment* of personal success? Except in certain highly specialized areas which are comparable to law or engineering, is it really any more important that the businessman spend four years of tedium in the liberal arts than that the professional superstar in athletics spend four years in a college or university? Heaven knows, one of the reasons why the costs of universities have soared is the exploitative uses business and professional athletics--and many other areas of American life, including American families looking for havens for their adolescents—make of the university.

Once, no doubt, college or university was a unique way by which the merely literate could be given at least speaking acquaintance with the wide world of culture, that is, high culture. This is certainly no longer the case. There exist a great diversity of ways in which the modern media and other institutions perform this function, and very often better than it can be done by the university.

One of the most encouraging movements now going on in this country—spurred in considerable part by the recent ugliness of the university scene —is the de-emphasis that seemingly is taking place on the university diploma and on "credentialism" generally. As Dael Wolfe has very recently pointed out, studies show that there is indeed a high correlation between college graduation and career income; but these studies, properly made, also show that what appears to be the central role of the college degree *is in fact the central role of the brighter mind.* There are assuredly occupational areas where university or college education *is important. University teaching,* law, medicine, engineering are all obvious in this regard. There are far more areas, however, where the diploma is a mere employment screening device, without much relation, as Wolfe notes, to the substantive issues involved.

I cannot help thinking that the structure of occupations in this country and, not least, the position of the lower socioeconomic and ethnic groups now struggling to get into the higher reaches of the structure, would be immensely improved if a more finite view of the university were to be taken. I have already stressed the harm that has been done both university and many interest-groups in our society by the university's assumption of the role of Super-Humanitarian. No less harm is being done both university and many a bright, motivated, aspiring young mind by the once useful but now all too often harmful adjuration: "Get a college education."

If the limits of the university are to be as wide as those of modern society and culture, then there is really no need for the university at all. Whatever the tasks of training necessary to fitting individuals to jobs, these can, as can the requisite search for knowledge necessary to technological survival, be carried on within the precincts of occupation, profession, or social and cultural interest.

Far more deadly to the character of the university than its exploitation in economic terms is its exploitation in psychological terms. That is, cultivation of the pernicious idea that by sending young people to universities one is teaching them to be human beings, to become citizens, to become leaders, or to find peace of mind, individuality, liberal-arts "soul," or whatever may be in the public mind at the moment.

It is simply impossible for the university to be anything and, at the same time, to be all things; to meet any personal needs and, at the same time, to meet all imaginable personal-psychological-social-cultural needs. One of the highest of all priorities for rehabilitation of the university as the setting for ideas, as the scene of teaching and scholarship in the learned disciplines, is abandonment of the present limitless, boundless, Faustian conception of the university and its relation to man and society. Anyhow, who needs the university as mere microcosm of society?

IV

CAN THESE requirements for the rehabilitation of the university be feasibly met during the next few years—or, for that matter, any requirements designed to restore to the university the status it once had as enclave for teaching and scholarship in the humanities and the sciences? I hope so. I do not know. Who could know? At the moment, all things considered, it seems highly unlikely. I will conclude where I began: by noting the increasing intensity of the conflict between the structure of the university, the purpose and mission of the university, as these are readily translatable into the kinds of roles and statuses we find in the university, and the whole gathering fury of the winds of modernity. Very probably the New Left, for all its disdain of history save as weapon of political combat, has, down underneath its rhetoric, a surer sense of this mounting conflict than most of us who love the university. The Left can echo Voltaire's *Ecrasez l'infâme!* with reasonable certainty that the university in America today has, by virtue of the Higher Capitalism and the other structural characteristics it has taken on during the past quarter of a century, as precarious a relation to modernity as the corrupt Church had in the 18th century.

I have said that the role of professor is today as

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deeply damaged a role—damaged by the currents of change described above—as the role of guildsman, knight, or landed aristocrat was damaged by the changes which were eventually to yield Western society its ages of capitalism, nationalism, democracy, socialism, and its several other sequences or phases of the history of modernity. Clearly, however, it does not follow that the contemporary professor will disappear overnight. The knight didn't; neither did the proud guild master. And, as we know, there are still remnants of the landed aristocracy to read about in the English press. Even guild halls have their uses, as every American tourist knows. No one can know how much longer the roles of professor, dean, chancellor, and the others that form the university structure will continue to evoke at least a spark of public recognition. All efforts to read the future are either games or else tricks played upon the naive. I prophesy neither doom nor future glory for the university in America. I do not prophesy.

We do know certain things, however. We know that the guildsman did not become capitalist entrepreneur; that the landed aristocracy, while it may indeed have financed a great deal of the capitalist system, did not become the bourgeoisie; that, in sum, the roles and structures of medieval society did not themselves *become* the roles and structures of modern industrial and democratic mass society.

Whether the university survives, how long it can survive in contemporary culture as the last signal vestige of medieval social organization, is impossible to foretell. I know only that while no society can do without knowledge and its diffusion to necessary groups and individuals—and this is, of course, notably the case in our technological age—it would be fatuous to assume that the university is indispensable. I reiterate: great societies have existed before without universities in them; great sectors of contemporary society already show capacities for doing many of the things that only a few decades ago were to be found only in the university: among them dissemination of "high culture."

There is no inherent, self-sustaining, irresistible majesty in the university; only the majesty that is conferred upon the university by a social order that, for whatever reason, has come to believe that there is something distinctive, something precious, something profoundly important in the university that is to be found nowhere else in society—not in factory, not in foundation, not in government agency, not in the media, not in the church, not in mental health clinic, nor anywhere else. And when this belief is allowed to erode, majesty erodes with it.

The greatness that is Harvard and the glory that is Berkeley can perish in but a few years, their presently celebrated degrees the objects of ridicule, their halls untenanted by any of the illustrious, their mission degraded to the caring, the feeding, and the policing of the young. Not even the young, though, will long choose to stay at Harvard and Berkeley once the word gets around that history has passed the universities by, that what the universities have to offer is no longer valued deeply either by those inside the university or those outside. History is filled with degrees, titles, ranks, and diplomas that were once thought to be important but that became in due time—after their functional importance had disappeared—mere curiosities or relics.

For more than two decades now the leaders of the American university, from Berkeley to Harvard, have done their best to make the university "relevant" to society, nation, and world; through a calculated development of growths within the university for which the words "thicket" and "jungle" are at the moment scarcely extreme. And these same leaders—faculty and administrative—have somehow wound up having made the university seem more *irrelevant* at the present moment than it has ever seemed during the nearly ten centuries of its existence in the West. "Who needs it?" is a question one may confidently expect to hear in rising frequency, not merely from the students of the Left who shout it now, but from a great many members of American society. As the no doubt just if cruel punishment for having tried to be all things to all sectors of American society, the university has ended up ignominiously meaning very little to anyone.

As MATTERS now stand in the university we are like a religious monastery insisting upon all the affluence of a freebooting capitalism; an aristocracy masochistically tormenting itself with the slogans of revolutionary democracy; a community of pacifists insistent upon riding off in all directions at once to battle the enemy; an enclave of intellectual autonomy that is yet privileged to remake the entire social order through profligate humanitarianism or calculated revolution. We declare ourselves an intellectual elite, fully entitled to aristocratic tenure of status, and at the same time the microcosm of economic, political, social, and cultural activities that even the surrounding society often seems too small to contain. It is a lovely fantasy.

If it be said that the sheer volume of the capital represented by university plant and equipment should be sufficient to maintain the university permanently in American society, I can only point to the equal volume of capital—relatively speaking—once expended on pyramids, coliseums, and cathedrals in the West, now gathering places for tourists and other sightseers. If it be said that surely *some* use will have to be found for the laboratories, classrooms, dormitories, faculty clubs, and student unions, I can only say that "some" use is not precisely what we are concerned with at the present time in discussions of the future of the American university.

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The Pornography Caper

Herbert L. Packer

PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSIONS, as Elizabeth B. Drew once put it in the *Atlantic*, are often "self-inflicted hotfoots." The tangled story of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography serves as a paradigmatic example of the truth of this observation. After documenting that assertion, I shall try to come to grips with the substance of the Report and the data on which it rests. Finally, I want to explore a possible constitutional doctrine that could render moot legislative arguments about what kind of conduct to forbid.

My bias in this essay is that of a lawyer who believes pornography to be a nuisance rather than a menace. Effective legal controls for this nuisance I consider to be a worse nuisance than what they attempt to suppress, which a democratic, open society can ill afford.

I

THE COMMISSION owes its existence to the initiative of Senator John McClellan (D., Ark.). He, joined by Senator Karl Mundt (D., S. Dak.) and others, introduced a resolution that found the traffic in obscenity and pornography to be "a matter of national concern." What John McClellan thinks is a matter of "national concern" clearly becomes just that. He steered his resolution through the Senate Judiciary Committee, through the House, and it became law as P.L. 90-100. This law directed the President to set up an advisory commission whose purpose was: "After a thorough study which shall include a study of the causal relationship of such materials to anti-social behavior, to recommend advisable, appropriate, effective, and constitutional means to deal effectively with such traffic in obscenity and pornography." The Commission was further directed:

> (1) with the aid of leading constitutional law authorities, to analyze the laws pertaining to the control of obscenity and pornography; and to evaluate and recommend definitions of obscenity and pornography;
>
> (2) to ascertain the methods employed in the distribution of obscene and pornographic materials and to explore the nature and volume of traffic in such materials;
>
> (3) to study the effect of obscenity and pornography upon the public, and particularly minors, and its relationship to crime and other antisocial behavior; and
>
> (4) to recommend such legislative, administrative, or other advisable and appropriate action as the Commission deems necessary to regulate effectively the flow of such traffic, without in any way interfering with constitutional rights.

P.L. 90-100 became law in October 1967 and President Johnson appointed the Commission's members in January 1968. In July 1968 Congress funded the Commission and extended its tenure to provide two years for its studies.

I have no idea what backstairs maneuvers accompanied the selection of the members. The Commission at its first meeting in July 1968 elected William B. Lockhart as its chairman. Although it is most unusual for a Commission to elect its own chairman, Lockhart was a natural choice. He is dean of the University of Minnesota Law School, and a leading academic authority on obscenity laws. (It may or may not be a coincidence that the White House, on announcing the composition of the Committee in January, stated that Mr. Lockhart would be the chairman.)

The Commission set about its work quietly, eschewing public hearings and proceeding with the help of a carefully selected staff, to commission, carry out, and review the studies that Congress had expected. The first public hint of trouble came in the late fall of 1969 when two members of the Commission—Commissioners Hill and Link—conducted "runaway" public hearings in eight cities, contrary to the Commission's announced policy. These hearings, whose general tenor was strongly in favor of tightening legal controls, were extensively reported in the press.

As the time for publication of the Report drew close, a number of odd incidents occurred. The first was the publication of what purported to be the Commission's Report* which sounded very much like a Birchite document. Many people

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* *The Obscenity Report*, 130 pp., $5.95, distributed by Stein and Day. The copyright of this volume is held by Stein and Day, and no indication of authorship is ever given. Stein and Day obviously owe us an explanation.

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thought this document a parody. Among lawyers, it was thought to be a hoax perpetrated by law students. Although its provenance is unknown to me, one ought to compare this spurious document with the dissenting views expressed in the genuine report by Commissioners Hill and Link, who had conducted the "runaway" hearings. There is a marked similarity.

Then the text of the Report was prematurely "leaked" to the House Subcommittee on Postal Operations. The leak was made by an unidentified Commission member to Representative Robert Nix (D., Pa.), who on August 11 and 12 conducted hearings before the Subcommittee on the leaked report. The hearings were pretty much given over on the first day to a refutation of the as-yet-unpublished findings of the Commission. The star witness, Professor Victor B. Cline, of the University of Utah—who reappears as the dissenters' principal expert on the behavioral sciences—said:

> This review is limited by the fact that I don't have most of the original studies which are cited and used as evidence in coming to many of [the Commission's] conclusions. . . . Despite this, enough details are given and I am acquainted with some of the studies sufficiently to comment on them.

Professor Cline's sense of grievance is a bit hard to understand, since he was trying to refute an unpublished purloined Report.

President Nixon's sole appointee to the Commission—Charles H. Keating, Jr., a Cincinnati lawyer and founder of Citizens for Decent Literature—had been warning the President for about eleven months "not only that the pornographers will have taken a giant step toward winning the war but that your administration will receive the blame." The warning was quickly heeded. Ronald Ziegler, the President's flack, declared to reporters without being asked: The President has views at variance with those of the Report. Thus, before the Report was even submitted to him, the President dissociated himself from it.

The Associated Press also obtained a "leaked" version of the final report, which then became extensively publicized. As the controversy grew hotter, Commissioner Keating, Nixon's man on the Commission, filed suit to enjoin publication of the Report on the ground that the Commission had denied him sufficient time to prepare a dissent. He obtained a preliminary injunction. But, finally, Keating and Lockhart agreed that Keating could have until September 29 to file his dissent. Since the Report was scheduled to go to the President and Congress on September 30, had it been delayed beyond that date, it might never have been released. Mr. Keating met his deadline and the Government Printing Office printed just enough copies of the whole Report and the various dissents for the officials immediately involved. I have never seen the GPO Report, nor do I have any expectation of seeing it. Private enterprise rapidly filled the breach.*

Just seventeen days after the Commission's Report was made public, the Senate rejected it. On October 17, the Senate passed a condemnatory resolution introduced by Senator McClellan by a vote of 60 to 5; and President Nixon, in a statement released at the height of the 1970 campaign, denounced the document. There is no good reason to suppose that the President even glanced at the Report. Thus hundreds of thousands of dollars and thousands of man-hours later, the Commission's work had become a source of personal pain for many of its members and the occasion for national cries of shame.

II

WHAT DID THE REPORT SAY to outrage the Senate and the President at a time when the political wars were at their hottest? Just this: 1) "Extensive empirical investigation . . . provides no evidence that exposure to or use of explicit sexual materials play a significant role in the causation of social or individual harms such as crime, delinquency, sexual or non-sexual deviancy or severe emotional disturbances." 2) "Public opinion in America does not support the imposition of legal prohibitions upon the right of adults to read or see explicit sexual materials." 3) "Therefore, the Commission recommends the repeal of [federal, state, and local] legislation" which prevents adults from getting access to what has previously been labeled "obscene."

The Commission also recommended that the states should enact legislation preventing the exposure of young persons to pictorial erotica—by which textual material is to be excluded—and prohibiting public displays of pictorial erotica. The Commission recommended that Congress legislate against unsolicited mail advertising. In fact, Congress has already done just that.† But, of course, these modest legislative proposals have not saved the Commission from attack on the repeal proposals just cited.

The Commission's Report, whose legislative recommendations take up only twenty-eight pages, is based on four reports prepared by panels of the Commission. These include: (a) a report on traffic and distribution of sexually-oriented materials in the United States; (b) a report on the impact of

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* *The Report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography*, Bantam Books (paperback), 720 pp., $1.65; Random House (hardcover edition), $10.00.

† The Senate, on September 23, 1970, passed a bill providing specific language for labeling sexually-oriented advertising sent through the mails and permitting recipients of such mail to return it unopened at the sender's expense. A similar bill had previously been passed by the House. After the two bills have their language reconciled, the completed bill will be sent to the President for his signature.

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erotica; (c) a report on positive approaches: the development of healthy attitudes toward sexuality; and (d) a report on legal considerations relating to erotica. I shall comment only on the second panel report. All four consume over 400 pages in the Bantam edition. Another 175 pages are taken up primarily by the dissents of three members of the Commission.

PERHAPS THE BEST WAY of discussing the Commission's findings is to put them in the context of the bitter and venomously personal attacks of the dissenters. They were Morton A. Hill, S.J., president of Morality in Media, New York; the Rev. Winfrey C. Link, administrator of the McKendree Manor Methodist Retirement Home, Hermitage, Tennessee; and the aforementioned Charles H. Keating, Jr., appointed by the President. These several gentlemen—the dissent of Messrs. Hill and Link is concurred in by Mr. Keating, who then voices a disagreement of his own—open their dissent with the statement that: "The Commission's majority report is a Magna Carta for the pornographer." They quickly dispose of the Commission's empirical evidence with the observation that inquiry into effects is beside the point because the central question is whether and to what extent society may establish and maintain moral standards. I should have thought that the question was not that, but rather *how* society may do that. Precisely, the question is not (as the dissenters seem to think) a moral question but a functional question asking what laws enforced by what sanctions and involving what costs will enable society (meaning *our* society) to establish and maintain morals. Unfortunately, neither the Report nor the dissent illuminates that question. As I shall presently show, the Report fails just because it does not illuminate that question. However, since it is hard for the dissenters to keep reiterating their central proposition for 175 pages, they first attack the chairman, Dean Lockhart, and the Commission's General Counsel, Professor Paul Bender, both of whom they identify as members of the American Civil Liberties Union, whose subversive nature apparently (to the dissenters) requires no comment. They attack the Report of the Legal Panel which had summarized the state of the law with respect to obscenity. One would have to be a legal illiterate to accept the dissenters' attempt to frame a counter-Legal Report, consisting as it does of a mishmash of headnotes, quotations from legal encyclopedias, and excerpts from Supreme Court opinions (interspersed with ominous comments such as "Justice Fortas is no longer on the Court").

The Legal Panel Report is uninspired. It is a straight-faced but hopeless attempt to give some intellectual coherence to the Supreme Court's lucubrations on the subject. As I shall suggest below, this effort was misguided. Yet the Panel Report is as game an effort to summarize the bewildering state of constitutional law on obscenity as I have seen in print.

The most controversial portion of the Commission's Report is unquestionably the Panel Report on the "Impact of Erotica." Of the six members of this Panel only one (Dean Lockhart, sitting *ex officio*) was not a behavioral scientist.* Although the dissenters had opened their attack by claiming that empirical studies were irrelevant, they here enlisted the support of Professor Cline to mount what is their most effective engagement against the Report. To me, it is odd that this Panel Report neglected to deal with the "aesthetic objections" to erotica (the Report's own term). Students of literature like George Steiner have dwelt on the pernicious effects of erotica not only on readers but also on the creators of what passes for "literature."† The gist of the "aesthetic" objection is that pornography corrupts taste, primarily the taste of those who seek to supply what the consumer wants. While I believe that writers like Steiner are profoundly right, it is hard to see what remedy laws can provide for the evils they discern. The Panel Report would have been strengthened had this been pointed out.

The "behavioral scientists" reached two conclusions from their empirical evidence: 1) Public opinion does not support legal efforts to prevent adult Americans from reading or seeing whatever they like; 2) it cannot be demonstrated that pornography causes crime or delinquency. Their conclusions are based on a review of the empirical literature, on analysis of crime statistics, and on research commissioned by the Panel.**

The Panel commissioned a very elaborate attitudinal study. This particular document comes down to the facts that (a) only 2 per cent of their interviewees spontaneously mentioned the prevalence of erotica as an important national problem, and that (b) most Americans think that erotica has undesirable effects on people's behavior, but that (c) when this attitude is more carefully examined it appears that with respect

* The Panel chairman, Otto N. Larson, is professor of sociology at the University of Washington; G. William Jones teaches communications at Southern Methodist University; Joseph T. Klapper is director of social research for CBS; Morris A. Lipton teaches psychiatry and is director of research development at the University of North Carolina; Marvin E. Wolfgang is director of the Center of Criminological Research at the University of Pennsylvania.

† See Steiner, "Night Words: High Pornography and Human Privacy," reprinted in Hughes (ed.), *Perspectives on Pornography*. The essays by George P. Elliott and Ernest van den Haag in the same volume are marked by sensitivity to the same values as Steiner's.

** The studies on which these conclusions rest are contained in the ten-volume *Technical Reports* of the Commission, available from the Government Printing Office. While I have not yet tried to obtain these volumes, I won't conceal from the reader my conclusion that the game isn't worth the candle. While perusal of the *Technical Report* volumes might alter this conclusion, I leave to intending Ph.D.'s in sociology the task of examining the "underlying data."

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to the respondents' own experience, socially desirable or neutral effects of exposure to erotica predominate. To give two examples of the variation between people's perception of the effects of erotica and their own experience the study reports as follows:

Effect	*% who say it has effect*	*Effect on respondent*	*Effect on someone known to respondent*	*Effect on no one known*
Provide info re sex	61%	24%	15%	22%
Lead to a breakdown of morals	56%	1%	13%	38%

They further report that 51 per cent of their sample would "be inclined to favor the availability" of erotica if it were "clearly demonstrated" that such material had no harmful effects while 79 per cent would oppose availability if it were shown that harmful effects occurred. Fifty-one per cent is a pretty slim majority, particularly considering the quoted qualifications.

Finally, the authors of the Panel Report state that people who identify harmful results are more likely to have seen less erotic material recently, to be less educated, older, and more conservative than . . . whom? Than their "counterparts," we are told, whoever that may be. The complete study, including the ten volumes of *Technical Reports,* may supplement these data. Yet it is, at best, very poor strategy for a report to be as dogmatic and unsupported as this one appears to be. The attitudinal study that the Panel commissioned is a pretty damp firecracker.

OBVIOUSLY, the empirical studies of effects are far more important than the public-opinion studies, since the latter fall if the former are weak. Citing Masters's and Johnson's *Human Sexual Response* as demonstrating that it is possible to measure human sexual arousal, the Panel Report moves on to an examination of behavioral responses to erotica. The Panel Report relies exclusively (with one exception) on second-hand studies. By second-hand I mean both people's asserted recollections of their previous exposure to erotica and their own statements about their arousal when experimentally exposed to erotica. These second-hand studies, which owe nothing to Masters and Johnson, are simply hearsay which the Panel analyzes for many tedious pages. The Commission appears to have sponsored only one study that may justly be called "experimental." That study sparked a controversy that made headlines.

The experiment, conducted at the University of North Carolina so outraged Congressman Nix that he devoted the second day of his hearings to raking the principal investigator—James L. Howard, assistant professor of psychiatry at the University of North Carolina Medical School—over the coals (at one point he gratuitously observed that had Dr. Howard not volunteered to testify, he would have been subpoenaed). Twenty-three male students had volunteered to participate in this experiment. While I cannot share Congressman Nix's sense of outrage, I tend to view the experiment as trivial and of doubtful relevance. By hooking up the subjects' penises to measuring devices (it is not reported whose ingenuity was responsible for devising the hardware, or perhaps, software)* the principal investigator succeeded in demonstrating that over a three-week period the subjects became satiated with erotica. After a short layoff, their interest returned. Consequently, the study concluded triumphantly that the hypothesized satiation effect was confirmed, as anyone could have told the experimenters. This seems to me a good example of how rigor and triviality are related in empirical behavioral work. One may well conclude that, if the controversy had been foreseen, the Panel would probably not have commissioned this experiment. One may also wonder whether not commissioning it would have been a defeat for "behavioral science."

The culminating section of the Panel Report on Effects is entitled "Erotica and Antisocial and Criminal Behavior." This is where the behavioral approach stands or falls: as the Report plainly concedes, people's attitudes toward erotica depend on whether a harmful effect can be shown to exist. The Report claims that the existing research "provides no substantial basis for the belief that erotic materials constitute a primary or significant cause of the development of character defects or that they operate as a significant determinative factor in causing crime or delinquency."

As I have previously said, the Panel Report is based on a review of the empirical literature, on an analysis of crime statistics, and on studies that the Panel had commissioned. That remains true of this culminating section of the Panel Report. It is terribly difficult to prove a negative. Burying the reader in a cloud of studies and in statistical analysis only compounds the difficulty. The statistical analysis is flawed because the Panel forgot to define "delinquency." If delinquency includes conduct that would not be criminal in an adult—like being a wayward child, or a child in need of correction—which the concept usually does include, then I fail to see how any amount of statistical analysis can possibly demonstrate anything what-

* The experiment also measured urinary acid phosphatase, and heart rate. Interest in erotica was measured by observing the time spent by the subjects in examining erotic material. In addition, the subjects each submitted to a variety of psychological tests and to three psychiatric interviews.

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ever about the connection between X (which is undefined) and Y (exposure to erotica).

The studies, of which one comparing a group of convicted rapists with a matched group of nonsex offenders is typical,* tend to demonstrate almost nothing except that such studies prove nothing. We are told that this study shows:

> All subjects were asked at what age they first saw each of fifteen erotic depictions, and mean ages of first exposure were computed for each of the two groups and each of the types of erotica. The data in Table 36 show that the mean age of first exposure of the rapists was one-half a year or more later than that of the matched nonsex offenders in reference to eight of the fifteen items and one-half a year or more earlier in reference to two. The biggest difference between the groups for which nonsex offenders had a mean age of first exposure of 14.95, and rapists a mean age of first exposure of 18.19. Rapists were also found to have a generally later mean age of first exposure to erotica than a nonmatched sample of college students and a lower age than a nonmatched sample of members of men's clubs.

Who needs it?

After 140 pages of examining "the data," the Panel Report on the Impact of Erotica finally sputters out with the observation that:

> . . . [I]t is obviously not possible, and never would be possible, to state that never on any occasion, under any conditions, did any erotic material ever contribute in any way to the likelihood of any individual committing a sex crime. Indeed, no such statement could be made about any kind of nonerotic material.

Thanks a lot, fellows.

While the behavioral studies, which are the heart of the Effects Panel's case, prove almost nothing, the dissenters devote many pages to picking holes in the data which likewise prove almost nothing. They muster much material to support their assertion that erotica does cause criminal behavior. This material is worthless: it consists almost exclusively of anecdotal reports by police. While the proponents of the majority position have not succeeded in proving their case, the dissenters may have inadvertently strengthened the case by resorting to halftruths, distortions, and, to paraphrase the old story about statistics, "damned lies." The most clearly disgusting passage in the entire report comes when Mr. Keating in his separate dissent prints the names and addresses of the leading distributors of pornography.† Mr. Keating is plainly guilty of aiding and abetting the distribution of pornography.

The predominantly behavioral tone of the Report strikes me as a disservice to the position that the majority espouses. Given the fact that the behavioral sciences have so little to say about the connection between erotica and people's behavior, a far better ploy, in my judgment, would have been to acknowledge this deficiency and simply to state the recommendations without attempting to justify them as resting on anything but the liberal, humane, and pluralistic values that presumably motivated the majority of the Commission. That course would have given the dissenters much less to snipe at and would have cost the Commission much less in money, time, and, finally, credibility. By relying so heavily and so misguidedly on the behavioral sciences, the Commission's Report suffers terribly in readability. The effort may have been very costly in all the respects just stated.

III

THE VIOLENCE of the Presidential and Congressional reaction, provoked by the Report's behavioral tone, guarantees that it will be consigned to at least temporary oblivion. At this stage in the nation's history there is no chance whatever that the recommendations of the Commission will be enacted into law. The contrary may very well happen. I would bet that we are quite likely to see a spate of even tougher laws passed against pornography than we now have, fueled at least in part by the controversy over the Report.

That prospect does not dismay me, since there is no reason to suppose that we are willing to support a vigorous campaign of law-enforcement against pornography. Such a campaign would involve costs in money, manpower, and invasions of privacy that we as a society are unwilling to pay. Passing laws costs a great deal. Given the dimensions of our present crime problem, rhetoric (passing tough laws) is the administration's only weapon.

I think that our present use of the First Amendment as a constitutional means of limiting the effect of anti-pornography laws is misguided. The Supreme Court has got itself into a box; it must either function as a Supreme Board of Censors and read every allegedly dirty book and watch every allegedly dirty movie that is attacked before it or give up the unequal struggle. Potter Stewart's famous quip that he doesn't know the meaning of hard-core pornography but that he knows it when he sees it is a perfect illustration of the Court's dilemma. In the end, if we stick with the First Amendment I would guess that the pressure of their other business will compel the Supreme Court to get out of the obscenity business and leave it to the local boards of censorship. As for reinterpreting the First Amendment, that seems naive. First, the Supreme Court is so heavily mired in its old decisions. (In *Roth* v. *United*

* My assertion that this study is "typical" should be checked against the Panel Report in the light of my bias that research is the opiate of behavioral scientists.

† Let the interested reader find them himself.

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States, 354 U.S. 476 [1957], the Court held that "obscenity is not within the area of constitutionally protected speech or press." This decision and its numerous progeny placed the Court in the dilemma to which I have referred. While the Court can distinguish *Roth,* how can it overrule that decision and still rely on the First Amendment?) Second, the Black-Douglas absolutist position that freedom of speech means just that is indefensible: libel and incitement to commit a crime, to say nothing of conspiracy, demonstrate that "speech is speech" can never mean that the First Amendment protects every form of speech.

In place of the First Amendment, I would suggest that the opponents of anti-pornography laws should rely instead on the doctrine of "substantive due process," which means simply that legislation which lacks a rational basis does not pass constitutional muster. "Substantive due process" is a doctrine that has been in bad odor for at least thirty-five years. It was used to strike down economic regulatory legislation. Holmes and Brandeis had labeled the doctrine as an effort to read the economic predilections of justices like the Four Horsemen (MacReynolds, Van Devanter, Sutherland, and Butler) into the Constitution. And so it was. The effect of the great authority of Holmes and Brandeis, plus the effects of the changing views of constitutional law that their views induced the law schools to adopt, resulted in the present generation of judges and legal scholars becoming allergic to "substantive due process."* The reluctance strikes me as being counter-productive for the liberal spirit in 1971. After all, it is the choice of minorities to be pluralistic rather than economic regulation which is at stake when the state uses the ultimate weapon of the criminal sanction to suppress such things as pornography. The "Brandeis brief" (which Brandeis developed before he took his seat on the Supreme Court) was originally a weapon against "substantive due process." The Brandeis brief was originally used to marshal economic facts to sustain economic regulatory legislation by demonstrating its rationality, thus undermining the old-fashioned substantive due process. The same technique, I believe, can be used to show that it is irrational to enforce morals legislation that attempts to suppress consensual transactions, like the sale of pornography. By mustering economic facts that demonstrate what a heavy price we pay in money and human resources, costs which could be allocated to more pressing social needs than the chimerical benefits of suppressing pornography, courts may eventually be brought to view morals legislation as irrational and, therefore, unconstitutional.

So far, the attack on morals legislation has had some limited successes† without the benefit of a Brandeis brief. A variety of constitutional pegs exists: the Religion Clause of the First Amendment,** the "cruel and unusual punishment" clause of the Eighth Amendment,†† the Ninth Amendment.‡ But these *ad hoc* constitutional pegs are not good enough. The Supreme Court badly needs a unifying theory if the attack is to be truly successful. "Substantive due process" may well be that theory, if the Supreme Court can ever be led to overcome its "allergy" to it. Doctrinal purity—not producing *ad hoc,* result-oriented decisions—ought to be important to the Supreme Court. Doctrinal purity means essentially intellectual honesty. That seems to me to weigh the scales quite heavily in favor of "substantive due process."

However the Supreme Court may resolve the "substantive due process" problem, I suspect that it is to courts rather than to legislatures that we must look to begin the process of reforming our substantive criminal law to bring our commitments into balance with our capacities.

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* The term "allergy" as referring to substantive due process was first used by Justice White, dissenting in *Robinson* v. *California,* 370 U.S. 660, 689 (1962).

† *Stanley* v. *Georgia,* 394 U.S. 557 (1969) (prohibiting making the mere private possession of pornography criminal); *Griswold* v. *Connecticut,* 381 U.S. 479 (1965) (invalidating statute making the prescription of contraceptives illegal); *People* v. *Belous,* 80 Cal. Rptr. 354 (1969) (invalidating anti-abortion statute).

** As Professor Louis Henkin has pointed out in a much-cited article, "Morals and the Constitution: The Sin of Obscenity," *Columbia Law Review,* LXIII, 391 (1963), among the constitutional clauses that may be mustered in aid of the battle is the Religion Clause of the First Amendment.

†† See *Robinson* v. *California,* 370 U.S. 660 (1962).

‡ Cited, *inter alia,* in support of the holding in *Griswold* v. *Connecticut,* 381 U.S. 479 (1965).

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Musical Wastes

Jack Richardson

THERE WAS ONCE a handy mode of argument available to those who felt the need to be positive about the achievements of the American theater. Faced with a season that had produced a succession of grim comedies, tired performances, and a moment or two of antic philistinism that was intended to be fresh experiment, the theater's advocate could always fall back on the musical comedy as a justification for continued loyalty to the American stage. All else in the year may have indeed been overwrought or moribund, but the musical comedy, the form of entertainment indigenous to Broadway, always was on hand with an example or two of expert ebullience. Some enthusiasts of song and dance would go even farther, and maintain that the musical *is* the American theater, is the only form that has produced a unique national excellence that has caught the imagination of an audience large enough to include both rough and fastidious tastes. And, indeed, it is hard to argue against this enthusiasm. What, for example, does one remember from the dramas and comedies of the 30's that has the sharp delight of a lyric by Larry Hart or Cole Porter? What has been so universally popular and inimitable as an Irving Berlin thirty-two bar narrative? What really tops the theatricality of the moment when the song begun by the star is augmented by a chorus, transformed into a dance, and ended, after a harrowing swirl of choreography, in a frozen tableau that demands, as its emotional climax, an explosion of applause?

Pal Joey, Guys and Dolls, South Pacific, My Fair Lady, Oklahoma, Brigadoon—these and others not quite so dazzling kept up a notion of imaginative fantasy while serious American drama was bogged down in minute social and psychological observation. During the 40's and 50's, which was the time of the personal statement in our theater, the time of Williams, Inge, Anderson, and Miller, the musical continued to be a glorious product of collaboration, an extraordinarily complex working out of a common enthusiasm. The enthusiasm, coaxed as it was out of a book, story, or play that had already achieved some sort of a reputation, was generally based on the second-hand. But that mattered little, for, like Elizabethan drama, the musical seemed to find its genius in embellishing a popular plot with intricate elaboration and outlandish sentiment.

One knows that the brilliant tumult of a musical comedy usually rests on a distant, fragile, and often very foolish premise, and that life is being thinned out a bit to let in a reprise or rousing first-act curtain for the ensemble. But the wonder of a musical is the theatrical behavior it presents, the direct and self-assured demonstration of a style that can turn the ingenuousness of an ingenue in love into a theatrical *tour de force*. The success of this style depends, of course, to a great extent on the talents a performer brings to a role, not on the substance he finds in it. But the history of musical comedy is more than a collection of show stoppers by Merman, Bolger, Martin, Harrison, Channing, and Mostel. It is, rather, a long, variously-styled proof that, artfully put together, elements which seem to have no theatrical affinity can coalesce into a work of more than fugitive delight if our imaginations can be prodded by wit and professional dazzlement into allowing that life may be *performed* truthfully. In short, somehow a mood must be created that permits us, as an audience, to accept parodies, caricatures, and general exaggerations of our behavior for the sake of seeing human action displayed in a context that makes poetry and a soft-shoe routine acceptable allies in entertainment.

IT IS SAD now to go on and report that either I have become too numbed by time and the realities of the ordinary world to respond any longer to these moods, or else these moods of happy tolerance are now nearly extinct. I have seen four musicals in the last month that have been proclaimed by critics and audiences to be successes, and that will, most likely, occupy their theaters for years. In all, this has meant that only some ten hours of my life have gone into acquiring the specific information necessary for an article on current American musical theater. Only ten hours! And yet I have seldom felt such a profound sense of waste or lamented so much the meaningless obliteration of minutes that could have been better spent in almost any other enterprise—staring at a stone, for example, or memorizing mystical aphorisms. Even during moments of my most tedious profligacies, I have never felt existence to be so barren and ungraceful as I did after watching half an act of each of these four works. They hammered away at me until I had no critical fortifications left—no perspective, no sense of proportion, no cognitive factor, no irony, no social curiosity. All I could feel while I should have been enjoying the moment, or at least reflecting on why I wasn't, was, as I have said, a deadening sense of waste.

This, I know, is a strange confession from someone who has

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confronted as much theater as an obsession can tolerate. By now I should have become so hardened to the facts of the stage that no ineptitude should cause such an extreme response. Yet I must plead the circumstances—in this case *Applause, Two by Two, The Rothschilds,* and *Company*. To have endured their combined onslaught has merit in itself; that I can here force myself to reflect on their affronts argues a devotion to critical duties that is heroic. I would prefer to leave all those perfunctory situations of plot, those frenzied, overblown performances, those tuneless scraps of song, and those explosions of lyric gibberish out of mind and unexamined. The readers of COMMENTARY have enough outrage thrust at them over issues that are of much greater importance than a dismal quartet of musical comedies. And yet I feel obliged to articulate my distaste, if only to be certain that such readers, buffeted as they are by the involved polemics of our time, do not, in seeking a little diversion from the world, arrive at one of these musical spectacles and thereby come to know an altogether unmodulated despair about our age.

LET US BEGIN first with *Company*, a work that has been applauded because it broke away from the old musical-comedy forms and chose to be a play with music rather than a series of songs and dances that occasionally allows a sobering bit of life to peep through. This, in any event, is what the popular critics have told us and what the audience seems to believe. *Company*, then, is the sophisticated musical of the group, something that is going to take us past the shallows of conventional entertainment. About that, more later. Let me first get to the details.

Company presents us with the adventures of an unmarried man in his thirties who moves as a sort of amiable *raisonneur* in and out of the lives of his married friends, who observes their problems and joys, and who broods over his reluctance to take the step that would keep him from being that extra man at the party. Each couple, of course, creates a little vignette about the peculiar difficulties of living with a mate in contemporary New York. Some, for example, take karate lessons, some try smoking pot, some play at old, extramarital-affair games. They all, of course, have the fashionable amount of desperation about them to be taken seriously as examples of love and life in a complex world.

It may be that George Furth, who wrote the series of playlets that make up *Company's* book, and Stephen Sondheim, who wrote the music and lyrics, know such couples and their friends, and find them a dull, silly lot. Perhaps they felt an honest need to share this information with us, to show us how existence wears life down in the big city. For this we might be grateful, except for the fact that *Company* has nothing to do with life anywhere on this planet, so that what finally wears down is our patience with the arch notions and fashionable attitudes that the authors wish to substitute for our experience of how human beings behave. The sophistication of *Company* is that of a mildly imaginative innocent who thinks there is something profound in being a little bit clever and very, very, neurotic. The people in *Company* think, feel, and behave with such cute incoherence and instability that they end by being nothing more than old, music-hall conceits that humbly serve a comic situation or a song.

And what situations! What songs! The former are plucked out of the stockpile of domestic crises and fun that has brought television profits for two decades; the latter are hardly more than bursts of tuneless patter that reiterate again and again the conviction that words should never coalesce into something resembling an idea. Both produce contemporary babble at its worst.

Finally, *Company* stays in the mind as one of those grim instances when Broadway decides to be audacious, when it announces with great righteousness that, this time, it is not going to settle for flashiness and old formulas. The experienced theatergoer has learned to be wary of these moments of adventure, for they generally mean that a narrow, facile sensibility is going to forget its proper station and aspire to something it takes to be experimental art. The result is always predictably pretentious, an example of aesthetic social-climbing that makes for both an ill-mannered and ill-starred night.

ABOUT *Applause*, let me first say that it has, as its leading lady, Lauren Bacall. Like most men who went through adolescence in the late 40's, I hold her in veneration. She and Bogart still seem to me to have created a male-female balance in their movies that has yet to be improved upon, and I feel I owe both his memory and her presence the duty of being graceful about any reservation I might have about this musical based on the film of some twenty years ago, *All About Eve*.

So, admitting that I am held in restraint by memories, I will only say that *Applause* is an innocuous little fable about the theater in which people who read fan magazines might believe. The story by now should be well known. Eve Harrington, a stage-struck young thing, is found waiting in a theater alley after the opening night of the celebrated Margo Channing's new play. She is brought backstage to meet the great star. She gushes with innocence, devotion, and admiration. Miss Channing is touched and takes her into her life. Slowly Eve begins to climb up in the world of the theater, and slowly we begin to see that she is not all froth and innocence. Could she really be ambitious? Could she really want, in essence, to replace her benefactress, Margo, in the big hit play? Soon we have the answer. But along the way, she is uncovered, and her terrible truths are revealed. She gains stardom, but, alas, loses a lot of friends.

Applause tells this fairy tale as ploddingly as possible, with songs and chorus numbers that have nothing essentially to do with the backstage saga, but that keep up quite nicely the sentimental traditions of show business. "Applause," the title song, is the last in a long line of effusions about life on the stage, a close relation

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of "There's No Business Like Show Business" and "That's Entertainment." It seems to me no better or worse than the others. It is, like the entire play, merely an imitation of what was originally a bad guess about the nature of the theater world. However, lest I be accused by the book writers of not noticing the modern touches they have added to the original story, I will mention that in this version of the Eve legend, Margo Channing has, as her faithful companion and hairdresser, a sweet, loving homosexual. How worldly and inventive the theater has become in twenty years!

As for Miss Bacall herself, if she ever plays any role on the stage that has a small bit of intelligence or sting to it, she would be formidable indeed. There seems to be enough intelligence and sensuality about her for a heroic range, and yet, so far, she has done this warmed-over cocktail hors-d'oeuvre and a vapid little farce called *Cactus Flower*. Ah, but the theme of this review is waste, and it must, regrettably, also include Miss Bacall.

THERE HAS always been a mystique about Danny Kaye that has baffled me. Some very intelligent people have found him a master of comedy, a perfect embodiment of aerial whimsy. On the other hand, I have always considered him a gross, obtrusive performer who begged for his laughs by mugging, bodily exaggeration, nonsense sounds, and other similarly infantile devices. However, I had never seen Kaye on the stage, so I went to *Two by Two* hoping to be disabused of the bad impression of him that I had culled from the movies and television. What took place on the stage of the Imperial Theater proved that I had been too generous in my evaluation. If anything, this retelling of the legend of Noah, his ark, and the divine inundation, made Kaye seem more outlandishly grotesque than ever before. It is one thing to wink and wiggle through a performance of *The Kid From Brooklyn*; but to bring those attributes to the portrayal of a patriarch and agent of God, goes beyond poor performing into blasphemous self-indulgence.

I do not mean by the above that Noah's divine charge cannot be treated humorously. I only wish *Two by Two* had treated it thus. What it does instead is to make something trivially vulgar out of a situation that is terrifyingly funny. One and only one joke pervades the entire play, and that has to do with Noah's longevity. Examples: Noah to his son: "Stop behaving like a child. You're almost a man now. You're one hundred and one years old." Noah to his wife: "If only I were three hundred again." There is even a song, "Ninety Again," that drags this conceit around the block for a good five minutes.

Apart from this, *Two by Two*—which, by the way, is based on Clifford Odets's *The Flowering Peach*, a play I did not see, but that could not have been so imbecile as this adaptation of it by Peter Stone—tries valiantly to make a family farce out of the destruction of the world. All the points of interest in this work are so low, that it is hard to single out the most egregious example of tawdry modernizing, but I shall choose a number in the first act as a representative of the kind of sensitivity that has gone into this 1970 version of the myth of the Flood. Noah has just told his children what God expects of them, and their response is to move to one side of the stage and start up a number called "Put Him Away." It makes one wish for Central Committees or Inquisitions when one sees such criminal acts and knows that their perpetrators are not going to lose a few years of freedom or at least a pair of ears.

And to think that one of the perpetrators is Richard Rodgers, who for so long was part of the really antic and innovative in musical theater. His songs for this work float about in aimless conspiracy with the lyrics of Martin Charnin, and one feels that they end only when they have exhausted themselves. Indeed, over the whole evening there is a heavy feeling of fatigue, as if all concerned knew that they were struggling to make something viable out of the stillborn. In something so disastrous as *Two by Two*, every effort becomes visible, and all the straining sinews stick out and show their labor. It is a wearying sight that can send one into a doze early in the second act.

ON THE SUBJECT of *The Rothschilds*, I have little to say. It purports to be about the rise of that celebrated banking family and how, along the way, it achieved certain rights for fellow Jews in 19th-century Europe. Of course, it is not about this. It is about old Jewish jokes and attitudes that theater parties expect when they contract for such a musical, and so one of the great financial dynasties of the world is presented as though it were little more than an oversized candy store run on the wit and wisdom of old Second Avenue. One might actually suspect an attempt at satire in this treatment, if one didn't know that the minds responsible for *The Rothschilds* are demonstrably incapable of such a subtle mode of thought.

But I am finally out of patience with the whole experience. These are not really musicals; they are dull, market calculations. As such, I suppose, they are successful, and I leave it to those who feel apprehensive about our society to analyze what sort of audience could tolerate such dull commodities at $15 a ticket. As for me, I believe I have discharged all obligation ever to think of them again.

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An Aesthete at the Movies

Andrew Sarris

I ENCOUNTERED Parker Tyler for the first time back in the very late 40's (either in 1948 or '49) when he came to Columbia to deliver a lecture on the artist as a movie character in both the literal and colloquial sense. He spoke in the basement of what is now Butler Library to a small gathering of the curious, down among book stacks in the cultural catacombs to which serious discussions of the cinema were consigned in those days. As a lecturer, Tyler seemed self-possessed, academically chic, and knowingly unruffled by his predominantly passive audience. He began by apologizing for not speaking ad lib as a previous lecturer in the series had done, and then proceeded to read a reasonably literate, humorless diatribe against Hollywood philistinism, then, especially, the deadest of dead horses.

Among the films he mentioned were *Odd Man Out* (Tyler didn't like the drunken brawling of Robert Newton's pop-eyed painter), *Night Song* (he didn't appreciate an anti-Picasso gibe to the effect that no one *really* knew which side of an abstract painting was up), *The Fantastic Symphony* (he deplored Jean-Louis Barrault's histrionic hysteria as Hector Berlioz), and, most memorably of all, *Humoresque*, a movie the lecturer denounced in no uncertain terms for its suggestion that boxing was a more virile pursuit (for John Garfield yet!) than playing the violin. Quite the contrary, Tyler insisted. It took more physical strength to be a violinist than to be a pugilist. He even paused dramatically (by lifting his eyes from his text and giving us all a searching glance) to allow that extraordinary fact to register on our impressionable minds. All in all, he came over as the self-appointed spokesman for some imaginary international brotherhood of artists in search of a more pleasing screen image.

The question period was dully deferential in those rare moments when it wasn't embarrassingly tongue-tied. Whatever our guilty love-feelings for movies might have been, we simply lacked the rhetorical resources to express these feelings in public without sounding emotionally immature. Nonetheless, I made a stab at a challenge by asking the lecturer how he reconciled his negative thesis with the sympathetic treatment of painters in *Rembrandt* and *Together Again*. He replied that he hadn't seen the movies in question, and that was the end of that. No fuss. No guilt. No intimation of inadequacy. At the time I felt that he could be excused for not having seen *Together Again*, an admittedly frothy farce in which Charles Boyer's sexy French painter loosens up Irene Dunne's repressed New England widow in an obvious exploitation, even then, of bohemian caricature. But it did seem strange to me that a professed cultural authority would make sweeping generalizations about the portrayal of artists in movies without having seen Laughton's uncanny incarnation of Rembrandt, an incarnation so memorable that it haunts me whenever I look at a Rembrandt self-portrait.

After the questioning dribbled to a stop I walked up to Tyler to press my point, but he was being monopolized by a young lady with an interminable complaint about the way movies broke up musical performances with expressive cuts to every major and minor character in the scenario. I was very embarrassed for the young lady because she happened to be quoting verbatim a complaint on the same subject in the *Time* of that week. I had been caught out in much the same way on many occasions. That was the way things were back then. We were all more influenced by Bosley Crowther and *Time* (James Agee, Manny Farber, or Brad Darrach as the case might be) than we cared to admit, and we desperately grabbed at whatever insights we could even at the cost of conspicuous plagiarism.

By then I had already read Tyler's two books (*The Hollywood Hallucination* and *Magic and Myth of the Movies*) in the process of devouring what little secondary literature there was on the cinema. At the very least, Tyler was a refreshing change of pace from the sociological spinach of John Grierson, Paul Rotha, Lewis Jacobs, and Siegfried Kracauer, all mournfully Marxist about the betrayal of the masses by Hollywood. Tyler helped tip the scales in film criticism from Marx to Freud by simply acknowledging the myth and magic of movie stars in the moviegoing experience. In retrospect he seems superficial, snobbish, and opaque next to such of his then unsung contemporaries as Agee, Farber, Otis Ferguson, Robert Warshow, and Erwin Panofsky, but he had come out with books and they hadn't, and that made all the difference.

AT THE TIME of Tyler's lecture I had been staggering through Columbia College's prestigious English Department for three years, a period in which I had become completely demoralized by my inability to impress such eminences as Lionel Trilling, Joseph Wood

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Krutch, Andrew Chiappe, Harrison Steeves, F. W. Dupee, *et al.* With what I in my woeful innocence imagined as the luxurious salons of literary success closed off to me, I decided to concentrate my cultural efforts on the wild, unfashionable frontier of motion pictures. But there were fearsome obstacles even there. I remember waiting outside Mr. Dupee's office for an opportunity to enroll in his creative writing course. I confided to a student waiting in the next chair my intention to specialize in film criticism. He looked at me with a supercilious expression and announced calmly that there hadn't been a decent movie made anywhere since *Mother*. I sank into my chair under his superior gaze which told me that he knew that I hadn't the foggiest idea that *Mother* happened to be a silent film directed by Pudovkin with oodles of lyrical montage. "What do you think of *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre?*" I countered weakly, hoping to gain his tolerance if not his respect. He shrugged his shoulders with generous indifference to let me off the hook: "Not bad, but very minor."

When I finally got in to see Mr. Dupee, he greeted the news of my interest in film criticism with what I took to be open-minded skepticism. Indeed, I recall his informing me that James Agee wrote interesting film criticism. The film criticism I myself finally turned in to Dupee's class was not very interesting by any standard. And there matters stood when Parker Tyler made his not so very grand entrance.

After Columbia I didn't see Tyler again until 1962, although in the intervening years our pens had crossed many times in the pages of *Film Culture*. We were both serving as jurors at a kind of home movie contest at the Charles Theater in downtown Manhattan. I reminded him of the time he had spoken at Columbia, and he responded by mildly scolding me for not having been guided by his lecture and example to abandon Hollywood movies for the serious (e.g., avant-garde) art of the cinema. I was somewhat taken aback by the tinny Gidean ring of this moralistic lecture right out of *The Counterfeiters,* compounded by the inherent ridiculousness of the situation. I mean after all here I was earning zero dollars a year from my writing, and being accused besides of selling out to the forces of philistinism by a man who lacked the style and lucidity to sustain his fastidious distinctions between what Art was and what it was not, especially in the marvelously impure realm of cinema.

As it was, our encounter in the Charles Theater culminated in a confusing controversy recorded in the pages of the *Village Voice* of that epoch. Since 1962 we have appeared together on lecture panels, but have never again exchanged a polite word. My own attitude toward Parker Tyler has never wavered in the slightest over the past twenty years between the respect I could never deny and the admiration I could never feel.

NOW THAT both *The Hollywood Hallucination** and *Magic and Myth of the Movies*† have been reprinted with generally laudatory forewords by Richard Schickel, it might be useful to establish a more permanent perspective on Parker Tyler. Some of the extravagant claims made for these two books cannot stand very close scrutiny. Too much of the writing is strained and stilted; too much of the reasoning is obscure and incoherent. Even Schickel mentions in passing occasional excesses of enthusiasm and lapses into incomprehensibility. At that Schickel is much too kind to prose of giddy ponderousness: "The advent of the talkies gave fresh opportunity to those cinemactors whose vocal chords contained unexplored reaches of eloquence, while a definite quota of studio population promptly lost their jobs as a result or hung on till they scratched the then unreliable sound track and automatically faded."

The muddled diction of the preceding sentence can be attributed to Tyler's mixed feelings about his subject, part movie-fan complicity and part academic aloofness. The sense of the sentence is a fairly

* Simon & Schuster, 256 pp., $5.95; paperback $1.95.
† Simon & Schuster, 320 pp., $5.95; paperback $1.95.

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banal bit of film history, but Tyler can't bear to let it just lie there as scholarly exposition; he must make it sit up and do tricks with a faintly derisive *Time* portmanteau put-down ("cinemactors"), double-duty technological jargon ("scratched" and "faded"), a bloodless sociological construction ("a definite quota of studio population") and the disconcerting dissonance of the genteel and the colloquial ("advent of the talkies"). And who else but Parker Tyler could introduce Frank Sinatra with a sentence as fatuously ceremonial as "I mean no other, of course, than he who goes by the curt cognomen of The Voice"?

Or, "At one moment of his career it appeared that Frank wanted to act, whatever that connotes, whereas his producer wanted him to sing, while his only class rival, Bing Crosby, wanted to sing in defiance of Hollywood ukase that he act." Again the sense of the sentence is clear enough, but the diction (and hence the author's attitude) is muddled by the mixture of Stage Delicatessen dialect ("class" pronounced with lingering nasality) and Roget roguishness ("ukase" on formal loan-out from the Kremlin to Hollywood).

Throughout the two books Tyler italicizes words he apparently deems intellectual, a form of neonized nomenclature worthy of the Hollywood dream merchants Tyler professes to despise: "For in Brewster's mind the facts of *lunacy*, *virginity*, and *death*, the last a mask for *impotence*, are inseparable." Further down in the paragraph, Tyler refers to a "complementary anxiety trio of *lunacy*, *potency*, and *crime*." This peculiarly typographical form of rhetorical emphasis is even less justifiable for a relatively neutral term, like "desirable state," or "incompletely available facts," or, so help me, "the human soul."

Both *The Hollywood Hallucination* and *Magic and Myth of the Movies* have dated very badly, much worse, in fact, than many of the better movie reviews of that period. Agee's chronicle of the 40's towers over Tyler's by any standard, and André Bazin's is light years more advanced and perceptive—not that Tyler ever intended to provide a useful film chronicle of a given period, but then neither did Agee or Bazin. Nevertheless they did provide profound testaments of their time out of an organic world view that resisted the fragmentation of their journalistic formats. By contrast, Tyler remains safely within his own defenses and disclaimers. Since Hollywood movies, according to Tyler, function invariably as myth rather than art, Tyler can ramble on without any of the routine disciplines of a professional reviewer. His prose may contain many atrocities but it is relatively uncluttered by credits, titles, and in-film cross-references. By postulating a mythic unconscious collectively designated as Hollywood, Tyler can evade value judgments and stylistic analysis with an approach he himself describes as "psychoanalytic-mythological." He manages almost magically to look down on his subject while lying on the couch of his own conceits. (By contrast, Tyler's later books on avant-garde and foreign art films, being more intellectually integrated with their subjects, offer more cogent examples of the author's critical intelligence.)

At the end of *Magic and Myth of the Movies,* there is a checklist of 39 films to which the author has referred, ranging in time from *City Lights* in 1931 to *The Seventh Veil* in 1946. The list, critically capricious in the extreme, touches on several recurring concerns: psychoanalysis, magic, witchcraft and ghosts, and, most strikingly of all, sex-role reversals. Tyler devotes an inordinate amount of space to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Indeed, it is through an analysis of Wilde's original novel that Tyler comes closest to expressing his own aesthetic under the guise of educating the reader.

Tyler on Wilde leads the reader down a garden path which Gore Vidal appears to have perceived more clearly than Richard Schickel. "Even when he was a charming youth," Tyler writes, "Dorian Gray as a literary hero was a monster for the British public to which Wilde with a measure of audacity introduced him. In truth he was the hunted, ideal object of Wilde's insistent aesthetic quest, which he dared to prosecute in the

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midst of life itself, even while believing that it was only ideal. Yet when in a work of fiction Wilde chose to thrust this image into the scene of a society in which its reality was not to be found, he understood the paradoxical logic that such a fabulous being, lost in the actual pitfalls of society, must carry within himself the seed of the gross decay of the sexual that was the social destiny and that Wilde saw everywhere around him in the vulgar and stupid rather than imaginative and aesthetic pursuit of women by men."

In describing Wilde's tactics against Victorian society Tyler seems to absorb Wilde's sensibility into his own: "In his acts—and he was interested in nothing but action, primarily in the social sense—Wilde had to move behind a screen. He moved behind the screen of imaginative concepts but in the very heart of society, behind all the outposts of the enemy camp. He moved secretly because he was a trespassing hunter of a unicorn whose existence was not even acknowledged by the authorities and that Wilde himself regarded as an ideal only: the purest personalized symbol of pagan love. In this aim Wilde was the prince of an alien and socially aggressive aesthetic philosophy, and Dorian Gray was his Mata Hari, a man in the service not of another country but of another sex."

Once the link between philistinism and heterosexuality has been made, Tyler's choice of films to discuss becomes less mysterious. For example, an obscure World War II movie called *Gung Ho* eluded most of the prestigious critics of the period, but not Tyler: "For as we see the naked, perspiring flesh of these youths, softened by the coincidental presence of their identification tags necklacing their chests, their military mold is visibly relaxed, as though the heat of the closed submarine caused to melt the less resistant metal of war that has become part of their bodies even as it has forced them to remove the rigid encrustation of war, their unmelting military paraphernalia. The spirit of war seemed to have reduced them to one substance, of which a gun, in its cold metal and hot bullet, was only a single outer limb; they had mythically conceived themselves as fire-throwing instruments, cold as steel, and not subject for the attack of a more peacetime heat, which, as in the city, they could wish only to flee from."

Tyler is at his most outrageous, perhaps also at his most personal, when he ruminates about the mystique of Mae West: "No doubt she observed the female impersonator and, spontaneously imitating him, extracted for herself all his comedy, leaving him his pathos. In effect, she expunged the burlesque quality from his active masquerade of the female sex. On the other hand, she implicitly placed on the altar of his seriousness the one supreme sacrifice of female nature: the mother's recognition and condonement of the homosexual flaw in her son!"

THERE is no doubt that the homosexual sensibility has always been very prominent in movies, and particularly in movie appreciation. But though I was aware of the vibrations of the velvet underground even back in 1949 when I was relatively unsophisticated about almost everything else, I never accepted the condescension of camp sensibility as the ultimate statement an intellectual could make about mass culture. It was always very difficult to talk about this issue frankly, but it has now been brought out into the open by Gore Vidal in *Myra Breckenridge*. Indeed, the very conception of Myra/Myron as Vidal's lurid vision of transvestism triumphant finds its cultural genesis in Tyler's studies of sexual criss-cross in *Turnabout* and *The Dybbuk*. Moreover, Myra/Myron is working on a book on Parker Tyler and the films of the 40's—"a book I intend to finish one day," Myra/Myron warns the reader, "with or without Mr. Tyler's assistance. Why? Because Tyler's vision (films are the unconscious expressions of age-old human myths) is perhaps the only important critical insight this century has produced. Also, Tyler's close scrutiny of the films of the 40's makes him our age's central thinker, if only because in the decade between 1935 and 1945, no irrelevant film was made in the United States."

Myra/Myron's ironical infatuation with Tyler's "vision" becomes almost libelously incriminating when coupled with Myra/Myron's sexual power fantasy: "the destruction of the last vestigial traces of traditional manhood in the race in order to realign the sexes, thus reducing population while increasing human happiness and preparing humanity for its next stage."

Tyler seems understandably reluctant to accept Vidal's boisterous tribute at face value, and Richard Schickel goes so far as to take a poke at Vidal in his introduction. The fact is that Parker Tyler has never come out into the open on the real-life basis of his bias. He has preferred, from the 40's until now, to pose as the high priest of high art in the temples of the philistines.

Finally, however, the trouble with Tyler is not so much an excess of eccentricity as a lack of historicity. He never see movies in the process of evolution. The fixed hierarchies of high art, the perpetually sterile activities of avant-garde filmmakers, the congealed myths of furtive wish fulfillment all lock Tyler into an aesthetic that conceals even as it seeks to justify his own personality.

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An End to Liberalism?

NIXON AGONISTES: THE CRISIS OF THE SELF-MADE MAN. By GARRY WILLS. *Houghton-Mifflin. 617 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by MARCUS CUNLIFFE

ATTACKS ON "liberalism" are nothing new in contemporary America. The neo-conservative heresies of a few years ago have become almost the clichés of current radicalism. Nor have we lacked descriptions and analyses of the political scene. Campaigns, candidates, conventions, elections, administrations have been exhaustively covered by Theodore White, Norman Mailer, and a score of others.

What is new in Garry Wills's richly congested book is the attempt to combine a close look at Nixon *et al.* with an ambitious critique of the whole American value system which Nixon is seen as exemplifying. The effect is sometimes awkward. Mr. Wills is fond of cinema-images and his book makes you think of a "big" film, idiosyncratically and insufficiently cut, by a clever if wayward director. There are abrupt shifts from near to far: close-ups, with the bumpy immediacy of the hand-held camera, alternate with long-range panoramas. Motion is frozen in stills, then jerked into comically frenetic activity. There is plenty of dialogue, and on top of that the director's own eloquent monologue, which ranges from the mischievously precise to the grandiloquently scarifying. The author is a humorist as wittily modish as Tom Wolfe and as blandly omniscient as H. L. Mencken (the latter evidently a favorite mentor for Mr. Wills, or Dr. Wills as his fellow-Baltimorean might have called him—he holds a Ph.D. in classics from Yale). But he is also a moralist, with a serious point to make, and he deserves a hearing on both counts.

The wit of *Nixon Agonistes* is a constant delight. Heckling, breezy, allusive, given now and then to forgivable flourishes of newspaper-baroque (as in the title?), the author is a born reporter, a cartoonist in words, master of a tradition of tongue-in-cheek sassiness that goes back well over a century in American political journalism. The personalities of dozens of public men are evoked with deft irreverence. Thus, George C. Wallace:

> He radiates a gritty nimbus of piety, violence, sex. Picked-on and self-righteous, yet aggressive and darkly venturous, he has the dingy attractive air of a B-movie idol, the kind who plays a handsome garage attendant.

Or Governor Romney:

> The blue eyes burn toward you under that low white cap of hair; the block of athletic face is rigid with fresh seizures of sincerity. . . . His trouble is not simply that he makes mistakes, but that they are *meant* mistakes (because everything he says is, with his laser eyes and acetylene faith, intensely meant).

Or the Vice President:

> Agnew has a neckless, lidded flow to him, with wraparound hair, a tubular perfection to his suits or golf outfits, quiet burbling oratory.

Or the President, as he looked in 1968:

> And the Nixon on the podium that morning, so exhaustively prepared, turning on well-oiled hinges from question to question, pointing to all his old friend-foes of the press . . . arm lifted from his slight Ed Sullivan humpback, his eyes testing response to each joke before his mouth gave its belated jerk, eyes and mouth in perpetual counterpoint . . . this Nixon was the soul of hard-earned competence, but he had no touch of greatness.

Excellent Menckenesque (acutely observant too on Everett Dirksen, with his "scrambled-egg hair, collapsed bike-tube lips, and winding wine-cellar voice," or on Nelson Rockefeller, down in Miami to test his luck: "his eyes disappear in the crinkling, his face one wide-doomed rictus"). Here, in convincing detail, is the low-down on the politics of the 1960's. But Wills's purpose is not to guy the politicos, even if he draws a devastatingly bleak picture of the Nixon home town, or notes with amused horror the atmosphere of "topless Quakerism" in the wedding ceremony of Julie and young David Eisenhower. Nor certainly is he partisan in his distastes; in line with other recent commentators he finds a good deal to praise in the Presidency of Dwight Eisenhower—more by far than in the brief administration of John F. Kennedy. Indeed his whole argument rests on the theory that Nixon has virtues—dogged, earnest, striving—and that Nixon is in this respect mediocre and synthetic merely because he represents the archetypal self-made American. He is the end only in the sense that he is the end of the line, the ultimate outcome of the now-decayed native heritage—a heritage blending the pieties of Locke, Adam Smith, and John Stuart Mill with the success-gospel of Benjamin Franklin and Horatio Alger, the covenanting fervor of Woodrow Wilson with the diluted, inspirational religiosity of Billy Graham and Norman Vincent Peale. In other words, the final wilted flower of American liberalism.

So we come to the main thesis. Liberalism is dead, and deserved to die because it has rested on false or contradictory premises. The moral-economic aspect of liberalism, according to Wills, assumed that—to put the matter harshly, in

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Mandeville's formulation—private vices would produce public benefits: individual effort formed character and virtually guaranteed success, and the sum total of all these individual endeavors, self-centered though they might be, would be a prosperously open society. The significant metaphor, as Wills nicely observes, is of a race in which those Americans primarily interested in accomplishment emphasize the competitive element, while those more concerned with equality emphasize the need to insure that everyone has the same chance at the starting line—and that there may be occasion to introduce handicaps and new starting lines. The actual and logical consequences are—Wills says—deplorable. The self-regulating market is inefficient and inequitable; and the liberal myth has obscured this truth.

As FOR the political myths of liberalism, they have persuaded Americans that each citizen can through the ballot box influence the composition and the conduct of his government. But at the national level at least—the only one Wills discusses—the liberal mechanism simply does not work. Presidential politics leads to a situation in which the voter must in effect choose between two men, instead of the several who would be needed to represent a proper spectrum. Worse still, neither major candidate stands for anything clearcut; and even if he did, his own Presidential options are miserably restricted; and even if they were not, his freedom of maneuver might well be dangerous.

The universities likewise are built upon the notion of a free play of ideas. But they are the servants of the state, and in practice permit only a small oscillation between each received truth and its nearest neighbor. Here Wills is particularly hard on Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., the one figure in the book against whom he shows animus. Schlesinger is treated as a glib spokesman for the liberal tradition, ready to accommodate its weary truisms to each change of the *Zeitgeist*. To Wills, the efforts of Schlesinger and of all academic liberals are futile, indeed purblind: they just do not see that it is itself both an "ideology"—a closed system—and an intellectually fraudulent one.

THIS BARE SUMMARY does not do justice to the verve of *Nixon Agonistes*. The author is a good logician; he pushes his points home with cheerful ferocity, and contrives to build up a formidable bill of charges against the American liberal tradition. He is surely correct in suggesting that the tradition has depended upon a series of myths, that these have never corresponded exactly to the real situation, and there is widespread disaffection inside contemporary America: the myths, that is, are now perceived to be myths. In this respect the volume is an admirable statement of a current mood in the United States, much more thoughtful and detached in tone than most other disaffected treatises of our era.

The difficulty comes with Mr. Wills's last chapter, when he addresses himself to the question of what should and might be done to put things right. He is of course not compelled to do so. An accountant who reports a bankruptcy is under no obligation to explain how the firm could nevertheless turn a profit in the next trading year. Even so, Mr. Wills's concluding remarks weaken the force of his previous argument. For he now insists that "criticism of liberalism does not lead logically to the destruction of its many achievements." Liberalism did apparently develop "marvelously improved regulating devices." It is only, he says (mark the *only*), "the pretense that these are *self*-regulating . . . that must be abandoned. Not the machinery, but the rationale behind it, has proved untenable, and has embittered men." So elections in themselves, he goes on, are good; private enterprise has distinct advantages; "thrift, prudence, industry, and self-discipline are components in any balanced approach to human virtue" (a balanced statement worthy of the pros who concoct party platforms); and free speech is a noble ideal. In short, "the historical achievement of liberalism is a great one." The trouble is apparently that its latter-day interpreta-

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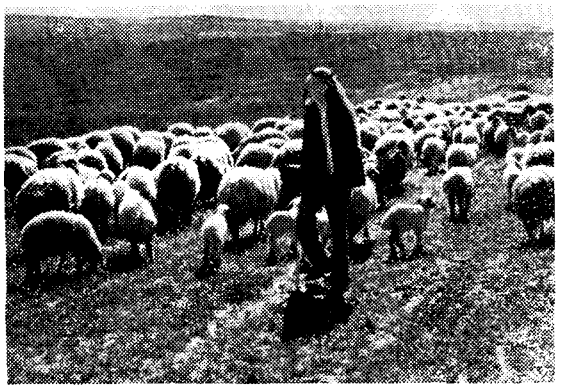

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tions are wrong: the liberalism of 1970 is anachronistic, or timid, or both.

AT THIS JUNCTURE one begins to wonder, in retrospect, what the author really means by "liberalism." Many of his criticisms are on target, recognizably valid descriptions of past and present America —but on which target? There are grave weaknesses in the American system. The society *has* become imprisoned in attitudes that breed complacency and selfishness. Some of these may be traced back to classic laissez-faire liberalism. But, as he acknowledges, many Americans in practice have been incompletely "liberal" in outlook, in not believing with more than half their minds that the self-regulating mechanism operated, or that one man was as good as the next. Was this proof of the inadequacy of the system, or of its failure entirely to dominate the scene, of human wisdom or of the inveterate inability of human beings in all societies to live up to their moral codes? Mr. Wills illustrates the confusions that link classic liberalism with 20th-century statist liberalism, but surely this is in part only a confusion of terminology: the word has here two very different meanings. Though he is merely following Louis Hartz and others, he widens the meaning still further in using "liberalism" to cover the Puritan moral code.

In some passages he seems rather to be talking about democracy: namely, the belief that all men ought to be presumed equal for as many purposes as possible. In these passages logic is apt to slip into logic-chopping. It is easy to show that there has been a gulf between theory and performance. It is likewise easy to poke holes philosophically in some of the contentions of democratic theory. Treated as a statement of fact, rather than as a moral imperative, the assertion that "all men are created equal" is close to nonsense, as a host of conservative polemicists have been swift to demonstrate. There is considerable comedy to be derived in a Willsian-scholastic way from a scrutiny of the semantic tangle of the manifold American pronouncements that try to reconcile equality and achievement. In a strictly logical sense, no doubt, the effort is close to absurdity: one cannot "reconcile" rival principles. But even in more humane societies than the United States, not to mention those that are less humane, the tension exists between the two; and as a matter of social reality, as distinct from logical rigor, it can only be mediated, or compromised. There *are* bad muddles in American social thought, bad because they gloss over disagreeable realities. There are also consolatory, somewhat artificial "liberal" pieties *(the young see farther than the old; there are no black criminals, only black victims)* which sound dishonest because those who say them feel they ought to say them; but this hypocrisy is of a relatively harmless order and may indeed be socially desirable. And then there are dilemmas fundamental to all societies that try, however imperfectly, to uphold an ideal of participatory existence. To insist on total compatibility of language and actuality, in these circumstances, is to ask for the impossible. Having discovered that it *is* impossible, the theorist may prove, as H. L. Mencken did to his own satisfaction in *Notes on Democracy* (1928), that democracy is per se a fraud. Which would leave us where?

WILLS CLEARLY dislikes "myths." Part of his objection to what he calls liberalism is that it is a collection of myths. He also takes Schlesinger to task for seeking to distinguish between "ideas" (good) and "ideologies" (bad), in other words between open, unsystematic thinking and closed, systematic thinking. But a myth, unless we confine our definition to the notion of myth as falsehood, is something believed in, a form of faith, a construct. In this light, an ideology is a myth; and so, by playing with words a little, one might show that Wills and Schlesinger were on the same side. More importantly, I think Wills fails to see that every society has need of myths. To be sure, they should be beneficial myths, in leading men toward a better society; they should be in advance of reality, at least in ex-

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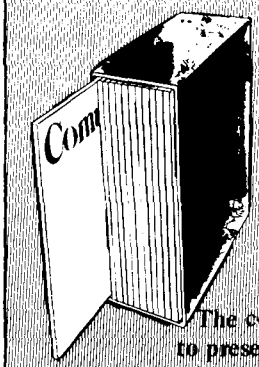

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pectation, not behind it. Here Wills seems to me correct, and wise. His dilemma is one to sympathize with, not to try to score off. Anyone who wishes to shake up the United States, as it needs shaking, is liable to reduce his indictment to insignificance once he starts to accept the various "givennesses" of the society. He surrenders his own argument: he is back, as Wills would say, with "liberalism." But there really are no conceivable alternatives for the United States, at any rate not within the spectrum of illiberalism. Excellent though many of Wills's points are, his tendency to Menckenian ruthlessness may render some of his analysis as barren as (his estimate of) conventional liberalism.

Poetry Collecting

THE VOICE THAT IS GREAT WITHIN US: AMERICAN POETRY OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. Edited by HAYDEN CARRUTH. *Bantam Books. 722 pp. $1.95.*

Reviewed by DAVID BROMWICH

ANTHOLOGIZING is a luckless game, and one to be avoided by all men blessed with sanity and precarious good taste. Nothing, at any rate, exposes bad taste quite so tellingly as an editorial mistake in the relative emphasis (six pages of Durrell against only two of Graves?) or selection of poets for an anthology. Oscar Williams never recovered from a polite observation made by Randall Jarrell: "The book has the merit of containing a larger selection of Oscar Williams's poems than I have ever seen in any other anthology. There are nine of his poems—and five of Hardy's." Recently there appeared a strange little production, one of those heroic and immodest efforts to condense the history of English poetry "from its beginnings." Specific choices had been authorized by the late Yvor Winters, and the book brought out posthumously by one of his students; naturally, Gerard Manley Hopkins (long ago excommunicated from *this* church) was nowhere to be found, while Donne appeared in a minor role compared to Winters himself. Such extreme instances can be a source of limited amusement—or they can remind us that an editor, however circumspect he may want to be, is making his own critical statement.

Mr. Carruth, for his part, seems a little confused about the nature of the task at hand. In one sense he has put together a strictly personal book, "what one moderately experienced and immoderately diligent reader has selected during two and a half years of reading." Yet his book will not disclaim a somewhat broader intent, that of embodying "the 'canon' of modern American poetry as viewed from the present." Carruth recognizes how far these two purposes may be at odds, and in a protective clause he allows that "of course, I have failed"; which pretty effectively steals a critic's fire. At all events, some of the more discerning readers of this anthology will remark its failure to include Mark Strand, John Hollander, Howard Nemerov, and Alan Dugan—among others—in a structure roomy enough to accommodate Kenneths Patchen, Fearing, and Rexroth, along with Goodmans Paul and Mitchell (the last hitherto unpublished as a poet). In the interest of being representative (his second goal), Carruth has thought to provide space for "a few poets [who] have produced work which, taken as a whole, is repugnant to my taste." This was probably not a good thing to do: the readers who would feel deprived by a more discriminating editorial judgment are an anonymous group, which is to say a nonexistent one. Did the editor put himself through those two years of work only to reprint poets he doesn't really like?

LeRoi Jones is here, as well as Diane Wakowski, a strident Californian who suffers from a disease known as "deep imagism":

George Washington, your name
is on my lips.
You had a lot of slaves.
I don't like the idea of slaves.
I know I am
a slave to

DAVID BROMWICH *is a student at Yale. Mr. Bromwich's article, "Lysergic Götterdämmerung," appeared in our December 1970 issue.*

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Wilson Carey McWilliams, page 35

"There is a connection between self-restraint and shame, and therefore a connection between shame and self-government or democracy. There is, therefore, a political danger in promoting shamelessness and the fullest self-expression or indulgence. To live together requires rules and a governing of the passions, and those who are without shame will be unruly and unrulable; having lost the ability to restrain themselves by observing the rules they collectively give themselves, they will have to be ruled by others. Tyranny is the natural and inevitable mode of government for the shameless and self-indulgent who have carried liberty beyond any restraint."

Walter Berns, page 13

"A man may be entitled to read an obscene book in his room, or expose himself indecently there, or masturbate, or flog himself, if that is possible, or what have you. We should protect his privacy. But if he demands a right to obtain the books and pictures he wants in the market, and to foregather in public places – discreet, if you will, but accessible to all – with others who share his tastes, then to grant him his right is to affect the world about us, and to impinge on other privacies. Even supposing that each of us can, if he wishes, effectively avert the eye and stop the ear (which, in truth, we cannot), what is commonly read and seen and heard and done intrudes upon us all, want it or not."

Alexander Bickel, page 26

"In a society in which the obscene or the violent is everywhere on display, whether any given individual is or is not exposed to, say, a dirty book may be less important than the perceptions of life and morality he draws from a community obsessed with the carnal or bestial. . . . It would have been difficult for a social scientist in Nero's Rome to prove that a person who himself did not read erotic stone tablets was thereby benefited as it would have been difficult for a social scientist in Cromwell's London to prove that a person who did read dirty books was thereby harmed; yet most historians would agree that the different attitudes toward public obscenity in Nero's Rome and Cromwell's London are not irrelevant to understanding these two very different societies."

James Q. Wilson, page 57

* * *

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too many masters, already
a red cardinal flies out of the pine tree in my eye swooping down to crack a nut and the bird feeds on a tray draped with a thirteen-starred flag.

Well, deep imagism, there you are. From Salvador Dali Miss Wakowski has learned the useful art of fakery, although it must be added that her nightmares lack that thrillingly gross gaucherie which is the saving grace of Dali. As for LeRoi Jones, the editor has neglected to print the anti-Semitic poems that stand as the true culmination of his *oeuvre*. (The interested reader is hereby urged to consult a preface to *Black Magic Poetry*, wherein is set forth Jones's conversion from white-inspired pessimism to pure black art, "the strengthening to destroy.") Such are the pitfalls of selecting poets to fit some undefined index of "current taste"—assuming that the special repugnancies of this editor coincide with my own.

But that is only one kind of shortcoming. On the other side, acting as a private anthologist and so a deliberately idiosyncratic one, Carruth has some equally disturbing lapses. Mitchell Goodman may be a friend of the family, but he is hardly so exciting as to have earned his place here; if Carruth was out to expose relatively unknown talent, he might have tried Alvin Feinman, who was "discovered" by John Hollander in his recent anthology, *Poems of Our Moment*, and whose "Landscape (Sicily)" is the best poem of its kind since Hart Crane:

I have seen your steeples and your lands
Speared by awkward cactuses and long birds
Flatten your yellow stones, your worn mountains.

Surely where those hills spilled villages
Toward the sea I should have wanted
Savagery, a touch icier than physical sport . . .

Instead, Carruth has given us someone named Mina Loy—one of the original Imagists (alas!) whom Ezra Pound took a liking to, now lost to fame—on the ground that she has lately been "rediscovered by the younger generation of American poets." Mina Loy wrote "Onyx-eyed Odalisques/ and ornithologists/ observe/ the flight/ of Eros obsolete," and the like. Carruth is wilfully cute, too, about his own body of work, showing off only a few unambitious gems culled from the margins of his editorial chore—such as "Why speak of the use/ of poetry? Poetry/ is what uses us," which sounds untrue, whatever it may mean. But he did introduce me to one unfamiliar author whom I want to read more of: Charles Reznikoff, an "objectivist" poet associated with William Carlos Williams and Louis Zukofsky, who wrote quiet, almost skeletal lyrics about God, Jewishness, and the New York urban pastoral. And that is, after all, the one success any anthologist hopes for.

On the more standard anthology figures, Carruth has made choices that are almost always original and very often right. True, when we find that his unorthodoxy has seen fit to include John Crowe Ransom's "Survey of Literature" rather than, say, "Captain Carpenter"—when we come across the couplet "Then there was poor Willie Blake,/ He foundered on sweet cake," which Jarrell (again) called "so queer a judgment, about a poet whose favorite word was *howl*, that one decides it is not a judgment but a rhyme"—we can't help wishing this originality out of sight, and longing for the dear old days of Oscar Williams and Louis Untermeyer. And in the selection from Jarrell himself it seems a pity to have forgotten "Losses," although "Well Water," which is reprinted by Carruth, illustrates the later development of Jarrell in the clearest possible terms—something other anthologists had never managed to do:

What a girl called "the dailiness of life"
(Adding an errand to your errand. Saying,
"Since you're up . . ." Making you a means to
A means to a means to) is well water
Pumped from an old well at the bottom of the world.
The pump you pump the water from is rusty
And hard to move and absurd, a squirrel-wheel
A sick squirrel turns slowly, through the sunny
Inexorable hours. And yet sometimes
The wheel turns of its own weight, the rusty
Pump pumps over your sweating face the clear
Water, cold, so cold! you cup your hands
And gulp from them the dailiness of life.

This sort of colloquial syntax may

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look quite as artificial as the formalism practiced by Winters: "The pump you pump the water from," "the rusty/ Pump pumps," and so on. But it is deserving of the epithet "Wordsworthian," and not merely in the bathetic sense; only Jarrell could have noticed "the sunny/ Inexorable hours" that bring out with such purity his theme of toil and happiness, and make a condescending view of the poem the real stock response.

In general, Carruth has sought to trace the movement of well-established poets out of their early, "pressurized" verse to more pleasantly relaxed forms. Thus, in the case of Karl Shapiro, "Auto Wreck" is there, but so are the recent prose poems (although Carruth does not, to my mind, fix on the best of these); Theodore Roethke's "Journey to the Interior" will be found alongside "My Papa's Waltz"; and the later Berryman has been allowed to coexist with old stuff like "The Traveller." Anthologists have until now been partial to the Robert Lowell of *Lord Weary's Castle,* and here Carruth really has the courage of his conviction: "The Drunken Fisherman" is still around, but "The Quaker Graveyard at Nantucket" has fallen by the wayside in favor of "Night Sweat" and "For George Santayana" (a characteristic if rather limp portrait). For such attentiveness poets are bound to show their gratitude, and indeed Lowell and Shapiro have supplied *The Voice That Is Great Within Us* with the needful encomia. And they are probably right, over all; *The Voice That Is Great Within Us* contains a great deal of poetry that is rich and strange and very American.

"AMERICA when will you be worthy of your twenty million Trotskyites?" So declared Allen Ginsberg, the most genuine and confused of our Whitmaniacs, in a poem unfortunately missing from this selection. Unfortunately because the real theme of this book *is* the spirit of America in American poetry, because Carruth reveals a national tendency in our poets that no amount of "confessional" art can obscure. Paul Goodman, for example, is surely the confessional poet *par excellence,* yet in a poem like "The Lordly Hudson" he is making a somewhat uncoordinated attempt to say "this is my land," with the sentiments of Whitman in the style of Longfellow:

"Driver, what stream is it?" I asked, well knowing,
it was our lordly Hudson hardly flowing,
"It is our lordly Hudson hardly flowing,"
he said, "under the green grown cliffs."

* * *

"Driver! has this a peer in Europe or the East?"
"No no!" he said. Home! Home!
be quiet, heart! this is our lordly Hudson
and has no peer in Europe or the East . . .

Time passes, and his heart begins to tell him different things; but doesn't the essential quality of his passion stay the same?

My countrymen have now become too base,
I give them up. I cannot speak with men
not my equals. I was an American,
where now to drag my days out and erase
this awful memory of the United States?

Which is instructive in its way, however maudlin; poetry drawing on the spring of national feeling can compass nationalism and anti-nationalism equally; the perfect instance of this is Pound, much admired nowadays by poets who would consider themselves politically on the Left.

The Poundian influence has always been a mixed blessing, tending to produce a poetry cunningly frayed at the edges, agrammatical, full of brisk and studied enthusiasm—all consequences of what Dr. Leavis termed his "portentous established immaturity." But there is also John Berryman, who I think has to be read as a disciple of Pound, although his *Dream Songs* will probably outlast Pound's *Cantos* (by virtue of being more human). Here, though, we get caught up in that sort of poetry in which the self must be dominant, while history is felt as an external force impinging now and then by

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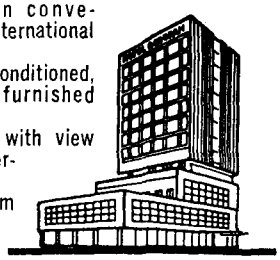

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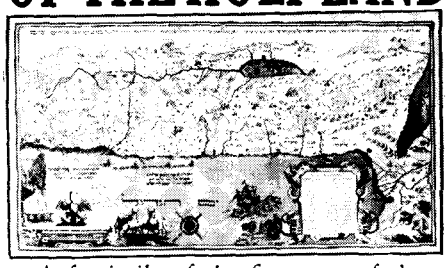

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way of the daily papers. One of the chief worries of recent American poetry is to move out of this isolation, to find a manner of public speech that doesn't grate on personal reflection.

THE ONE POET whose private consciousness has never excluded a public voice is, of course, Robert Lowell; and in "Inauguration Day, 1953," with its amazing modified sestet ("Ice, ice. Our wheels no longer move. . . ."), he wrote political poetry of force and an unexampled rigor. And Lowell has now become a regular observer of politics, albeit in a rather different spirit. His *Notebooks* bring together nearly as much work, quantitatively, as everything in his previous volumes, and the idea has something to do with laying bare the mind of the poet showing the process of raw creation at work under the assumption that it must be an interesting sight. To which the only answer may be: not always. Lowell has none of the brainlessness required to do good automatic writing, and none of the colloquial flippancy needed to write the poetry of daily themes; on the contrary, much of the material in *Notebooks* has about it the discarded and slightly garrulous wit that one normally associates with first drafts. The *crossing* of political with private aches must admit very strong odds, and the new poems are difficult going, partly because they abound in a sort of highclass gothic for which Lowell (unlike Berryman) does not have the right touch. Perhaps as a result of this strategy, Lowell is experiencing pretty severe diction problems—or so we may be inclined to think. "Orestes knew that Trojan chivalry was shit." (I was working from the second edition of *Notebooks,* and it has been supplanted by a third interpolation—just now brought to my attention—from which this line, along with some other infelicities, has been dropped. In a special note, Lowell indicates that for the first two additions he treated the book "as if it were a manuscript.")

The most prominent of the anti-war poets, Robert Bly, began by writing poetry about nature—which he is still doing, more or less *sotto voce.* Bly has written political poems which also seem to me to be good poems; but they are not in any sense ideological, not meant for the platform, as Brecht's could be:

O Germany—
Hearing the speeches that
ring from your house,
one laughs.
But whoever sees you,
Reaches for his knife.

It is an odd pattern to observe: an artist such as Bly, who never took energy from the urban milieu, can write all he likes on political subjects without corrupting his art—the manifesto gets absorbed into the texture of his landscape. Our poets, even in what should be the opportune moment, can't settle on an ideological posture, and this may not be altogether a loss; anyhow, they are in this respect considerably less uniform than the British poets of the 30's.

Yet certain features of American poetry must seem terribly uniform to the foreigner: its abruptness and provinciality, its uncanny fondness for *places.* (Weldon Kees—an original and unremembered poet whom Carruth, to his credit, decided to resurrect—once wrote a hypnotic poem composed almost entirely of the names of cities.) Right now, our poetry looks to be involved in some sort of escape into simplicity: witness the title of another anthology, *Naked Poetry.* But we ought to be good-humored about this—"Naked Poetry forsooth!" as a fairly well-dressed reviewer averred. Times change, of course, and it is the poetry (also *Poetry*) that remains.

Conspiracy Myth

JEWS AND FREEMASONS IN EUROPE, 1723-1939. By JACOB KATZ. *Harvard. 293 pp. $11.00*

Reviewed by NORMAN COHN

THIS BOOK suffers from a highly inappropriate title. Viewed as a study of Jews and Freemasons in Europe, it would be inadequate

NORMAN COHN *is the author of, among other works,* The Pursuit of the Millennium *and* Warrant for Genocide.

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and indeed misleading; but substitute "Germany" for "Europe" and many of its faults drop away. Some two thirds of the book are concerned with the attempts of German Jews to secure acceptance by the Masonic lodges, as a means to getting themselves accepted by German society as a whole. This story has never been systematically investigated before. Jacob Katz, a professor of sociology at the Hebrew University (where he also serves as rector), has devoted years of patient research to unraveling it, and the result is an original contribution to modern Jewish history. The remainder of the book is devoted to the myth of the world-conspiracy of Jews and Freemasons. The myth, to be sure, was an international one, but its inclusion does not give the book a truly European scope; for even in these chapters Professor Katz's attention remains concentrated on developments in Germany. In effect what we have here is a study of German Jews and German Freemasons.

The Freemasons originated in England in the first quarter of the 18th century; in 1717 an overall executive, known as the Grand Lodge, was set up in London. The principle of the Order was one of universal tolerance; the constitution was designed to encourage the various Christian bodies in Britain—Anglican, Roman Catholic, Free Church, Presbyterian, and the rest—to transcend their differences in a spirit of mutual good-will. When English Jews applied to join, the principle of tolerance was extended to them too; by 1740 Jews not only belonged to but held high office in the Order. However, when the Order spread to Germany it changed its nature. There, Freemasonry soon came to be regarded as a specifically Christian institution, in which Jews ought to have no place; and in the course of the 18th century the authorized German lodges effectively excluded Jews from membership. But for Jews, membership in a lodge offered a prospect of entry into German society—and this at a time when some Jews were beginning to want such an entry. To meet their needs, various unauthorized orders—i.e., or-

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ders of Masonic type but not connected with any of the German Grand Lodges—came into being, with the avowed purpose of accepting both Jews and Christians.

One of the livelier chapters in the book deals with the Order of Asiatic Brethren, otherwise known as the Brethren of St. John the Apostle from Asia in Europe. This unauthorized order was founded in Vienna in 1780-81 by two impoverished and unscrupulous Bavarian noblemen, the brothers von Ecker und Eckhoffen, and was built up with the help of a young Jew named Ephraim Hirschfeld. The ideology reflected the purpose of the organization, for it was a syncretism of theosophic doctrines of Christian origin with Kabbalistic ideas supplied by Hirschfeld. Yet, while care was taken not to offend the susceptibilities of the Christian members, the Jews found themselves obliged ceremonially to eat pork with milk. The order nevertheless recruited many Jewish members—mostly bankers and merchants yearning to mix with the minor aristocrats, army officers, and court officials who made up the Christian membership. But whatever acceptance the Jews achieved was short-lived, even in this marginal organization. When the headquarters moved to Schleswig, the leaders came under pressure to expel the Jewish members. In the end Hirschfeld himself, who had been the main source of spiritual nourishment for the order, was driven out, while the von Eckers took to writing anti-Semitic pamphlets.

WITH THE French Revolution the situation of the Jews changed, but far less in Germany than in France itself. Whereas French Jews were admitted into the Masonic lodges, German Jews in general were not. Instead, they turned to the Grand Lodge in Paris (the Grand Orient) for authorization to found a special lodge at Frankfurt. And although in theory this lodge was supposed to have both Jewish and Christian members, in practice the Christians were either Frenchmen or else Germans who had thrown in their lot with Napoleon. The new lodge was not recognized by other German lodges; and in Frankfurt itself, in the very year (1811) when the citizens were compelled by French pressure to grant civil rights to Jews, the lodges expressly adopted a constitution which limited membership to Christians. After Napoleon's fall the "Jewish lodge" secured a new authorization, from the Mother Lodge in London—but the only consequence was that relations between London and the other German lodges became strained. As for the "Jewish lodge," it became almost wholly Jewish, unrecognized in Germany and utterly isolated. In this it mirrored the situation of German Jewry in those years, when Jews were being progressively excluded from public life and even from student societies in the universities.

Once the old social order, with its rigidly distinct estates, had disintegrated, Jews had to be granted political citizenship. But at the same time, as Professor Katz shrewdly remarks, "the tendency to break down barriers on the political and legal plane produced the reaction of withdrawal behind firmer barriers on the intimate, social plane." This is the heart of the matter, and the main theme of the book; for in the Masonic lodges this reaction found particularly vivid expression. In the end, the barriers proved practically unbreachable. It is true that between the 1830's and the 1870's lodges in some parts of Germany, such as Saxony and Hamburg, did open their doors to a few Jews. But even during this period of relative liberalism the Prussian lodges, under the direct patronage and guidance of the House of Hohenzollern, held out; and with the revival of anti-Semitism from the 1870's onward, even lodges which had accepted Jews expelled them.

THE CHAPTERS dealing with the real relations between German Jews and German Freemasons are the best in the book. Those dealing with the myth of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy are in every way less satisfactory. In part, this results from Professor Katz's overwhelming preoccupation with German developments. For the idea that Jews and Freemasons were united in a conspiracy to secure world-domination for themselves originated not in Germany but in France. Professor Katz recognizes this fact, but he fails to draw the obvious conclusions. To understand how the myth achieved credibility and popularity, it would be necessary to examine the relations between Jews and Freemasons in 19th-century France. French Freemasons really did play a leading part in the anti-clerical movement, they really were deeply involved in the struggle between Church and State for the control of education. Jews were prominent among French Freemasons; how far did these Jews become active political opponents of the Church? In a book on Jews and Freemasons in Europe this question should surely have been examined in detail.

But then, Professor Katz never seems at home when dealing with France, and the passages he devotes to that country are full of errors. The names of the two founding fathers of modern French anti-Semitism, Des Mousseaux and Chabauty, are misspelled throughout. Moreover, Des Mousseaux is described as a "Catholic theologian," whereas in reality he was a layman with no qualifications in theology. The abbé Chabauty is made to reside in "the Poiton district" instead of in Poitou. The 20th-century anti-Semitic publicist Jouin is described as "a professing Catholic"; this is correct, but it would surely have been more to the point to mention that he was a Monsignor (no less!), and curé of the church of St. Augustin in Paris. This casual, not to say careless, approach to things French even extends to the language: the quotations from French texts in the notes abound in misspellings.

When Professor Katz traces the influence of the myth in Germany from 1920 onward he is on safer ground. The story has often been told before, but that is no reason for not telling it again. The dissemination of the myth in its most influential form, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, is a truly extraordinary episode, which still deserves to be better known than it is. Nevertheless, one may doubt

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whether Professor Katz puts the emphasis in quite the right places. According to him, once the slogan "Jews and Freemasons" was adopted by the Nazis it "constituted the means of persuasion for the liquidation of the Freemasons and the physical extermination of the Jews." But did it?

It is true that Hitler and Rosenberg had a lot to say about the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy; also, that under the Third Reich the Order was suppressed. But the Order was suppressed in the Soviet Union too, very soon after the Bolshevik Revolution; and Lenin, whatever his faults, was no addict of the *Protocols*. The fact is that no totalitarian state, whatever its ideology, could tolerate the existence of such an organization outside its own control. Moreover, although one branch of the Nazi security service did concern itself with Masonic affairs, individual Freemasons were not persecuted.

As for the Jews, it may be doubted whether the slogan "Freemasons and Jews" had much to do with their fate either. The myth of the Judeo-Masonic world-conspiracy was simply one variant of the myth of the Jewish world-conspiracy, and not the most important. The fantasy that most compulsively obsessed Hitler's mind was of a conspiracy of Jews and Communists, including Russian Communists. And that, no doubt, is why the German Freemasons emerged almost unscathed after the colossal killings which nearly destroyed European Jewry and which decimated the civilian population of the Soviet Union.

The Lone Eagle

THE WARTIME JOURNALS OF CHARLES A. LINDBERGH. *Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 1038 pp. $12.95.*

Reviewed by LOUIS BERG

THIS BOOK runs to over a thousand pages and weighs slightly over three-and-a-half pounds. It could have been contained, for all of the meat that is in it, within a less ponderous package. The editors have done neither Lindbergh nor the reader a service in allowing his wartime journals to appear all cluttered up with inert facts. Lindbergh's views on war and peace, his feelings toward the Jews, his true place in the patchwork of pro-fascists, isolationists, and pacifists that called itself America First may not be of earth-shaking consequence but they did serve at one time to mold or to harden public opinion, may even have played a part in shaping the events that led up to World War II, and are being offered now as a guide to the future. The intimacy a diary gives permits us to take a closer look at Lindbergh and his friends than was possible at the time, and we can now weigh his predictions against what actually happened. We are anxious to get at them, but first we must thread

LOUIS BERG, *a writer and critic, is a veteran contributor to these pages.*

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our way through a maze of irrelevance. What purpose, for example, is served by teasing us with such items as:

> After lunch I took a taxi to Senator Clark's office for a 3:30 appointment. We asked two or three other Senators to come in and we discussed the war and the best policies of this country to follow in regard to it.

Who were the other Senators? What was said, and by whom? We feel we have a right to know, if the diaries are to live up to their promise, but we are kept in the dark.

The trouble here is not so much that the book is badly edited as that it is not edited at all—we may guess at Lindbergh's stern insistence. The obvious reason is that it was feared that excision of any entry, however innocuous-vacuous, might give rise to a suspicion that the journals of the past had been tailored to fit the shape of the present. To allay our fears, we are supplied with an illustration showing a page of the diary in Lindbergh's own hand, accompanied by an affidavit from the typists who prepared it for press to the effect that it is a true and exact copy. We would have taken Lindbergh's unsupported word for it. He is, after all, an honorable man. "So were they all, all honorable men."

To such absurd lengths has the hands-off policy been carried that even errors in syntax have been knowingly retained—though some of these are howlers of the "between you and I" species. This could give the reader a false impression of Lindbergh's prose style. He is no grammarian, surely, but his writing is not without the gift of terseness approaching the aphoristic, and here and there are poetic flashes: "Death gives a background to life as night to the stars." Lindbergh has a genuine feeling for nature—preferably without people in it—and when he is communing with the wind and waves and the sky above, he approaches genuine eloquence. Lindbergh's tribute to his dog, Skean, who died, is similarly moving. One could wish that he had stayed with nature and not meddled in public affairs, or, better yet, had confined his outside activities to his services to science—the heart machine and Goddard's elevation of the Roman candle—where he had earned the nation's genuine respect.

HAVING SPRUNG to the defense of Lindbergh's prose style, I have practically exhausted the desire to say good things about the book. What I do not find abhorrent in it seems to me simpleminded—the opinions half-baked, the estimates superficial, the predictions wrong, and the politics questionable. All might well bear the label: MADE IN GERMANY. Perhaps it would be appropriate, at this point, simply to quote—more or less at random—from the meatier parts of the journals:

> Hitler submitted six-point proposal that would end Czechoslovakia *as a menace to Germany* . . . [emphasis added].
>
> Hitler's speech is carried in the morning papers. On the whole it is plausible and states the German case well—one of the best-written political speeches I have ever read. . . .
>
> It seems to me that this man, damned almost everywhere except in his own country, now holds the future of Europe in his hands. Civilization depends more on his wisdom than on the action of the democracies.
>
> . . . I cannot believe he will throw Europe into a major war over the present situation. It would take a madman to do that. Hitler is a mystic and a fanatic, but his actions and results in the past do not lead me to believe he is insane.
>
> Much as I disapprove of many things Germany has done, I believe she has pursued the only consistent policy in recent years.
>
> I think I have a little more confidence in the sanity of German leadership than [Lord Lothian] has.
>
> I do not believe [Herbert Hoover] recognized the decadence in England or the virility in Germany.
>
> I believe the future welfare of Western civilization depends on the strength of Germany.
>
> Would [Germany] attack France? Through the Maginot Line and against one of the world's best armies? Not likely. Move into Holland or Belgium? The gain hardly seems worth the prize. Would German planes bomb Paris or London? They can do this but at what profit? Nothing would bring the United States in more quickly.

Lindbergh makes no effort to conceal his pro-German bias. Early in his journals he confides: "I cannot help liking the Germans. They are like our own people. We should be working with them and not constantly crossing swords." Nothing can be more revelatory than his avoidance of the word "Nazi." It occurs only seven times—five after the war has ended and criticism of Hitler is now permissible, even among Germans. The word does stick in his throat apparently. He approaches the question of German mistreatment of Jews similarly in a gingerly fashion, more puzzled than outraged:

> They undoubtedly have a difficult Jewish problem but why is it necessary to handle it so unreasonably?

All the Germans he spoke to, he assures us, were opposed to the attacks on the Jews. However:

> The Jew, according to the German, is largely responsible for the internal collapse and revolution following the war. At the time of the inflation the Jews are said to have obtained the ownership of a large percentage of property in Berlin and other cities—lived in the best houses, drove the best automobiles, and mixed with the prettiest German girls.

This explanation apparently satisfies Lindbergh for we hear no more of the Nazi hounding of the Jews until the war is over and he is shown the concentration camps, the gas ovens, the mass graves, the skeleton-like survivors. These seem to have jolted him, but he is quick to recover:

> What the German has done to the Jew in Europe we are doing to the Jap in the Pacific.

This *before* Hiroshima, which might have given some justification to his outburst. He pursues the idea relentlessly, through a long recital of atrocities committed

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by our forces, American and Australian, in the Pacific—the killing of unarmed prisoners, who were pushed from planes, shot down as they advanced, unarmed and hands uplifted, to surrender. We do not need My Lai to convince us of the bestiality our own soldiers are capable of, but we still find it difficult to swallow the equation of outrages committed in the craze of combat with the efficient slaughterhouse "solution" of the Jewish "problem," the fiendish killing of six million men, women, and children, after unimaginable tortures —all on orders from up high. Typically, Lindbergh's sensibilities are not stirred by the wanton destruction of lives and proud cities through saturation bombing. He is an aviator, and mass slaughter is not immoral unless it is executed at ground level. Devastated Nuremberg stirs him to poetical expression rather than horror.

> Pushing my head further out, I can see one spire of the cathedral, gutted but still beautiful, dimly silhouetted in the light. Above there are broken clouds, and the stars are coming out. I feel surrounded by death. *Only in the sky is there hope* [italics mine—L. B.], only in that which man has never touched and which God forbid we ever will.

He seems unaware of the irony in his wistful hope—of the fact that the death that surrounded him came from the air. Not a cruel man, but detached. The flyer views things from too great a height. This may account for his silence on the terror bombing of Warsaw.

LINDBERGH HAS BEEN accused of fascist tendencies, and it is true that many of his utterances seemed to spring from Nazi propaganda, softened for Western consumption. Thus, the *Herrenvolk* become a great people, whose strength Europe desperately needs. *Drang nach Osten* is more than a grab of loose territory; it becomes a holy crusade against "Asiatic Communism" and the menace of Japan, in which crusade France and England should join but which, with criminal folly, they oppose. Returning from the Soviet Union he exposes her weakness in the air to the German High Command; leaving Germany for England, he is again guilty of "indiscretion," spilling to the British the information he has gathered of German air strength. The Germans are not disturbed: Hitler bestows on the gallant flyer one of his highest decorations, the Golden Eagle. Great Britain is less forgiving, and Lindbergh cannot understand why. We may charitably hope that he is not aware that he has been used, that his reassurances to the West might be precisely the screen that Germany needed to conceal its plans for conquest, that German strength was also what Germany wished reported. The Holy Crusade idea fizzles when Stalin makes a pact with Hitler for their joint feasting on the carcass of Poland, and when Japan joins the Axis. Lindbergh is not surprised; neither is he upset. He reads (or was he told?) the deeper meaning behind the German-Russian peace pact. As for Japan, he simply transfers the Yellow Peril to China. Frustrated in his efforts to persuade France and England to tolerate (or join) German aggression, he transports his activities to his own

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country, where he conducts an energetic campaign to block Lend-Lease, to maintain an arms embargo, and, above all, to keep America out of the war in Europe.

Would he have been as fervent if Germany rather than France and England had been favored by the Roosevelt administration? In the light of his European activities and his acknowledged pro-German proclivities, one may well doubt it. No one could question the earnestness of his campaign, however. Overnight, the Lone Eagle mingled with people, attended public meetings, made speeches, spoke to the press which he, not without reason, had despised; appeared on radio, allowed himself to be photographed. Never particularly anti-Semitic—some of his best friends really had been Jews, notably Jo Davidson, the sculptor—he launched into an attack on American Jewry, whom he charged with being a major force, through control of the press, in the conspiracy to involve us in the European war. He displayed here his usual lack of discrimination; for documentation quoted Fulton Lewis, who was rabid on the subject; for evidence, cited the transparent fact that the Jews everywhere in the world hated Nazi Germany.

My own recollection of the period is that the Jews in this country so feared the rising tide of anti-Semitism that they were remarkably subdued. Lindbergh's statements were certainly not calculated to stem the tide.

He made his charges against the Jews at a meeting of America First in Des Moines, and some of his own supporters felt that his remarks there were, at the very least, unwise. Lindbergh, who has always displayed a high degree of sensitivity to criticism—doubtless because he had been used to adulation—is indignant that anyone could find fault with his speech:

> I felt that I had worded my Des Moines address carefully and moderately. It seems that anything can be discussed today in America except the Jewish problem. The very mention of the word "Jew" is cause for a storm.

Does all this make Lindbergh a Nazi? Rather, I think, he resembles the German *Junkers*—that aristocratic, militaristic caste which prided itself on its "correctness." They might despise the *parvenu* Fuehrer but they accepted his authority. Similarly, Lindbergh despised the common people—"too many Americans of this generation want to live without working and win without fighting"—and hated Roosevelt, but when the nation was at war with Germany he patriotically offered his services. If he warned against war it was through no love of peace: he was no pacifist. He was sharply critical of motion pictures like *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *Sergeant York* because they stressed the horrors of war—enough to "turn anyone against it." "If only the U.S. could be on the right side of an intelligent war," he sighs—and little doubt is left that the right side is Germany.

Lindbergh is not without his virtues, but they are military virtues—strength, loyalty, duty, efficiency. He lived by a code rather than an ethos—a glorified Boy Scout code: "On my honor I will do my best to serve God and my country and obey the Scout Law." One helps an old lady across the street not so much out of consideration for her needs but because it says so in the Scout Manual. We are all familiar with the *New Yorker* cartoon showing the symbolic old lady being propelled against her will. Lindbergh's virtues might have served a more admirable purpose if they had stemmed from the heart.

In his support—this free spirit!—of an authoritarian system, he resembles not so much a Nazi as the astigmatic "liberals" who observe only out of one eye—the left one—who see the faults of the capitalistic system clearly, even magnified, but are blind to the crimes committed in the name of Communism. Lindbergh is their opposite number, fearing the Left more than the Right, to be sure, but he is equally purblind. His 20-0 vision hardly qualifies him as a seer.

One could forgive him his faulty vision, his errors of judgment, his support of an ugly system, if only he paid acknowledgment where events proved him wrong. Some admissions, to be sure, are wrung from him—he could hardly argue after the event that the Maginot Line guaranteed the safety of the West, or that German arms were invincible. He so twists his second thoughts, however, as to make it seem that he was right in the first place. He seizes upon the unholy mess left by World War II, as a vindication of all his theories.

Others, including some who were Nazis, now admit that they backed the wrong cause. Not Lindbergh. "The fool returneth to his folly like a dog to his vomit," says the Good Book. We hope that it is not Lindbergh's intention to revive the controversy in which he was involved, but the publication of his war journals at this particular and troubled time causes uneasiness. Does he seek personal vindication—the journals will not contribute to this—or does he conceive the times to be ripe for a revival of his ideas?

He may find an echo to his thoughts. It is true that we gained no permanent peace by warring on Germany and that we are faced, as Lindbergh points out in a letter to his publisher, with enemies perhaps more dangerous (because of their possession of nuclear weapons) than the ones we defeated. But would the U.S. be better off if it had permitted the *Herrenvolk* the mastery it sought over Europe and Asia? Quite apart from all other questions, can we believe that the nuclear bomb would have eluded German scientists?

Let us hope that Lindbergh's gloomy diagnosis of the present is no sounder than his prognostications in the past. In any event, there is nothing to be learned from the militarists or the isolationists.

All hope is not lost. Fear (of the nuclear bomb) carries an uneasy assurance of peace. Russia, despite Lindbergh's dark forebodings, has been contained in Europe. The Soviet Union has its internal troubles, and faces rebellion from its satellites. "It" has not yet happened here. Conceivably, it won't, and democracy may yet survive.

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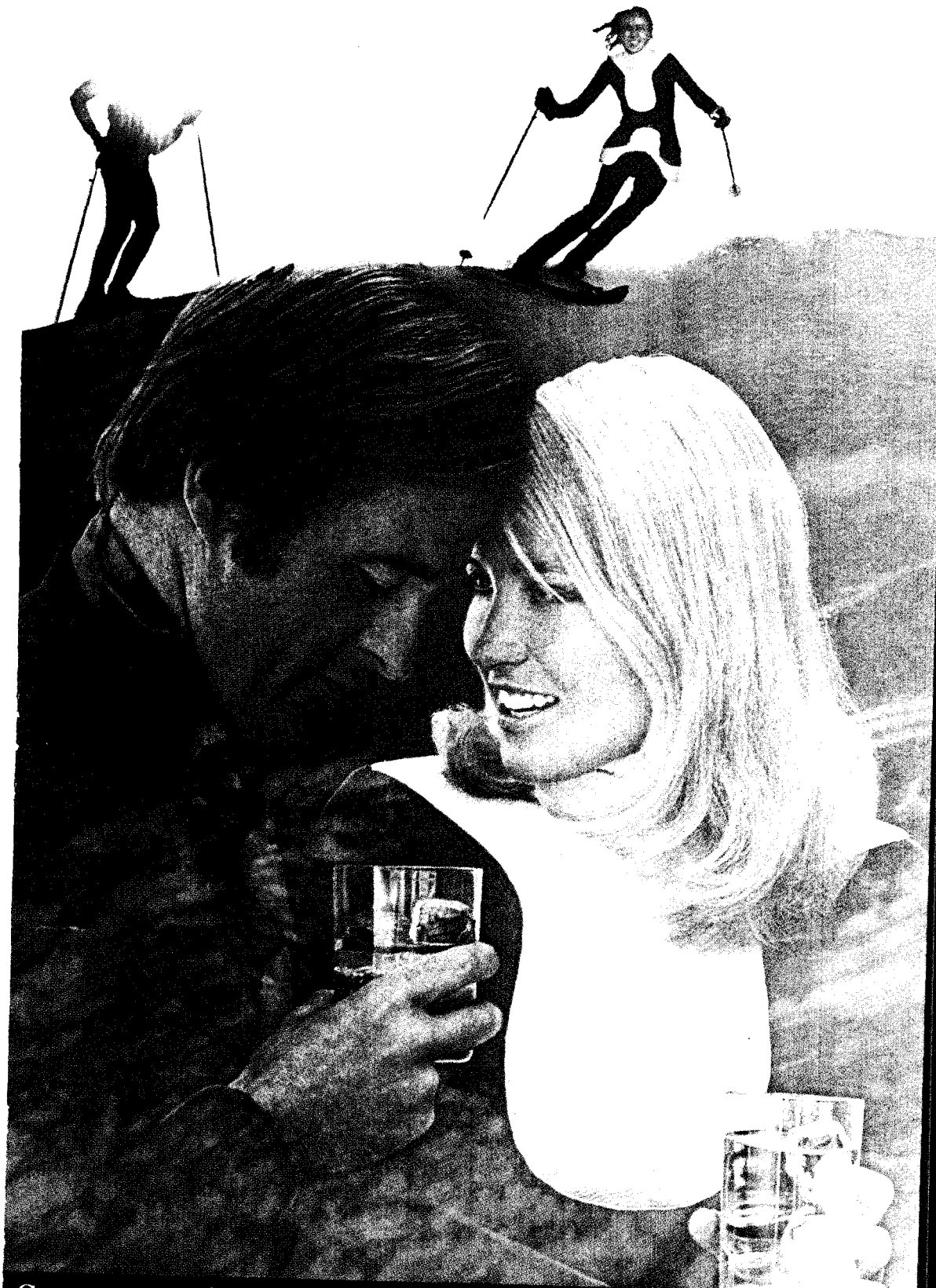

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